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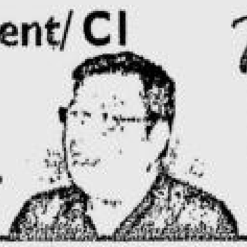

Tanong ng Bayan / A27

Laglagan sa halalan: Sinong mabibiktima?

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DRIVERS/ A20

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Monday, May 3, 2004 ★ 84 pages / 9 sections / vol. 19 / no. 145 P18

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Gringo-Lakas alliance up

De Venecia says gov't of nat'l unity to be formed

By Carlito Pablo

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GRINGO/ A20

EL SHADDAI'S CANDIDATES **ELEKSYON 2004**

GORDON MERCADO OSMEÑA REVILLA

ROXAS LAPID BARBERS TATAD

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By Amando Doronila

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INC/ A5

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By Carlito Pablo, Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Blanche S. Rivera

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Votes from these religious groups will complement those to be delivered by the political machinery of the ruling Lakas-Christian Mus-

GMA/ A8

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"No way can you say this has been stage-managed. This is a very spontaneous outpouring of emotion for the President, and believe me, it is like this all all over the country," says Kashiwahara, an award-winning movie and television director and now the President's campaign coordinator, who should know her real scenarios from the reel. "How can you simulate this when you see it at countryside crossings, in areas where it is hard to muster a crowd?"

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HARD WORK/ A22

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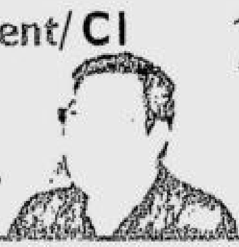

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
MONDAY, MAY 3, 2004
E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph
Second FRONT PAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Visayas and Mindanao including Palawan will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/05/03/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen.Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

Coo bares bribe offer, death threats

By Michael Lim Ubac

FOR P20 million and the promise of a Cabinet position, would she withdraw from the race?

Alyansa ng Pag-Asa senatorial candidate Olivia "Bong" Coo said no thanks, and started receiving death threats. Yesterday, Coo accused the camp of President Macapagal-Arroyo of being the source of the bribe offer and the threats.

During a press conference at Alyansa headquarters in Ortigas, Pasig City, Coo—four-time World Bowling champion who is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records—broke into tears as she recounted the "indecent proposal."

She said three persons associated with Ms Macapagal—presidential adviser on political affairs Gabriel Claudio, K-4 senatorial candidate Ramon "Bong" Revilla and a member of the First Family—pressured her to abandon her senatorial bid.

Her refusal resulted in "harmful threats" against herself and her family, Coo said, as tears rolled down her cheeks. She apologized to reporters for not being able to control her emotions.

"All my life I have played bowling ... wearing the flag on my shirt ... just to bring honor to our country," said Coo, who has brought home 37 gold medals since turning professional in 1970.

Coo addressed Ms Macapagal in Filipino: "As a mother, you know how it feels when your family is threatened. You don't have to do this just to crush Alyansa."

Alyansa standard-bearer Raul Roco and vice-presidential bet Herminio Aquino and all six other senatorial candidates—Jay Sonza and lawyers Perfecto Yasay, Frank Chavez, Edno Joson, Nicanor Gatmaytan and Melanio Mauricio—were present to give her support.

Yasay and Sonza volunteered details. They said Claudio first approached Coo on April 12 with the offer of a Malacañang position as presidential adviser on sports. Revilla's P20-million bribe offer reportedly came only last week.

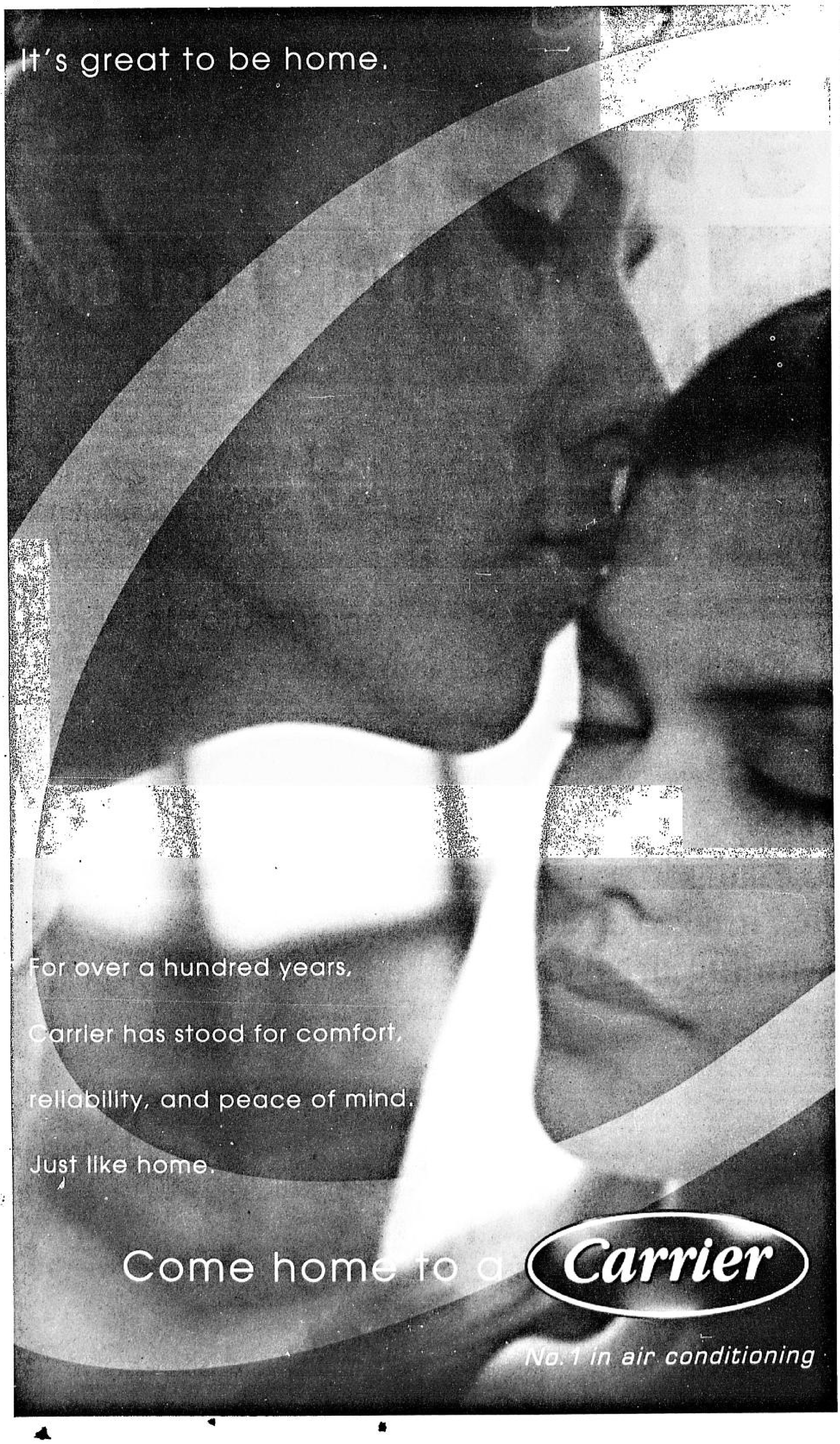
When these two failed, they said, a member of the First Family asked to meet with Coo on April 27. The third emissary gave her an ultimatum, Coo said—pledge allegiance to Ms Macapagal, or her family would be in danger.

Coo said Revilla's concern was their common nicknames. According to Gatmaytan and Chavez, Ramon Revilla Jr. failed to register his screen name "Bong" with the Commission on Elections, while Coo was registered as Olivia "Bong" Coo. This meant votes for "Bong" would be counted in Coo's favor.

But Revilla said Coo's story was "ridiculous."

In a phone interview, he told the INQUIRER it was Coo's camp that had demanded P20 million in exchange for dropping out of the race. Even when the price was lowered to P4 million, he said, his advisers decided to spend the money instead on an advertising campaign urging voters to write "Bong Revilla" or "Revilla" in their ballots.

Actually, the K4 bet said, the Comelec had issued a resolution stating that "Bong" votes would be tallied under his name. He said he was not taking any action against Coo.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Lacson, Poe in last-ditch unity talks

By Norman Bordadora and Carlito Pablo

OPPOSITION presidential candidates Fernando Poe Jr. and Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson were to meet last night in a last-ditch attempt to unify their forces, just eight days before the elections.

The eleventh-hour meeting to stave off opposition defeat in the May 10 polls followed reports that the politically influential Iglesia ni Cristo sect had decided to endorse the candidacy of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Supposed to attend last night's opposition meeting on Poe's side—besides the actor himself—were his campaign manager and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, security coordinator Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan and Rep. Imee Marcos, an opposition spokesperson said.

On Lacson's side were Representatives Ronaldo Zamora of San Juan and Agapito Aquino of Makati, and spokesperson Angelito Banayo.

KNP sources said that Lacson had earlier offered to withdraw if the INC would guarantee its support for Poe.

The same sources said that Poe himself had sent an appeal to INC Chief Minister Eraño Manalo to reconsider the reported INC decision to back Ms Macapagal.

But this was denied by Banayo, who said Lacson would not back out "under any circumstances."

"That's not true, there was no agreement at all," Banayo told the INQUIRER.

At one point before last night's meeting, Banayo, irked by supposed news leaks coming from Poe's side, said: "We better cancel the talks right now.

"What they're doing is not good. We've always been true to the confidentiality of our talks, then they come out with these false leaks," Banayo said.

Lacson twice canceled a series of sorties in eastern Visayas over the weekend to pursue last-minute unification efforts with the KNP standard-bearer.

Threats cancel GMA caravan

THREATS of bombings allegedly by extremist groups and her political rivals prompted President Macapagal-Arroyo to scrap a grand sea and land caravan from Cotabato City to Manila scheduled a few days before the May 10 elections.

Presidential campaign spokesperson Michael Defensor said the President was advised by her security advisers yesterday to cancel the four-day caravan from Mindanao and the Visayas to Luzon which would have started tomorrow.

The caravan would have brought the President from Davao City to Manila by Friday in time for the 9 p.m. "miting de avance" of the administration party.

Defensor told reporters in Malacañang that the authorities had obtained reliable information of a threat to launch bomb attacks during the President's scheduled appearances and during transit.

"The threat, which is reportedly coming from Muslim extremists and political rivals, is serious enough for us to change the last leg of the campaign," Defensor said. "It would have given the President a rare chance to showcase the roll-on, roll-off project (a sea and land highway connecting the islands) and fence in the areas where the President is strong and consolidate in areas where there are a lot of undecided voters."

He said the President could afford to cancel what was expected to be the highlight of her campaign because of her improving ratings in the opinion polls.

Defensor, however, said there was no need to beef up the President's security force and the President would spend the last few days of the campaign traveling by land in Luzon. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

'Greatest Filipino writer' laid to rest

By Margaux Ortiz and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

NICK Joaquin, National Artist for Literature, disliked tributes and would have frowned upon a lavish burial, but he could not escape his just rewards. Yesterday, he was accorded these during a hero's interment in which fellow national artists spoke with one voice and proclaimed him "the greatest Filipino writer."

"I cannot wait for history to pass judgment on you," Joaquin's good friend, novelist F. Sionil Jose, tearfully said in a special program at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. "I know you are averse to praise ... but you are the greatest Filipino writer." Having said the last words with emphasis, Sionil Jose received thunderous applause from the audience.

Joaquin, 86, died last Thursday.

Eight national artists—Sionil Jose, Napoleon Abueva, Virgilio Almario, Daisy Hontiveros-Avellana, Salvador Bernal, Leonor Orosa-Goquingco, Arturo Luz and Andrea Veneracion—laid white anthuriums near the gold-colored urn that contained Joaquin's ashes, while the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra played the "Ave Maria."

Another of Joaquin's good friends, artist Danny Dalena, strode to the stage wearing his signature wide-brimmed hat and holding a beer in one hand. Before he spoke, he took out a big white handkerchief and blew his nose loudly. "*Si Nick po 'yan, nagpaparamdam* (That was Nick making his presence felt)," he said.

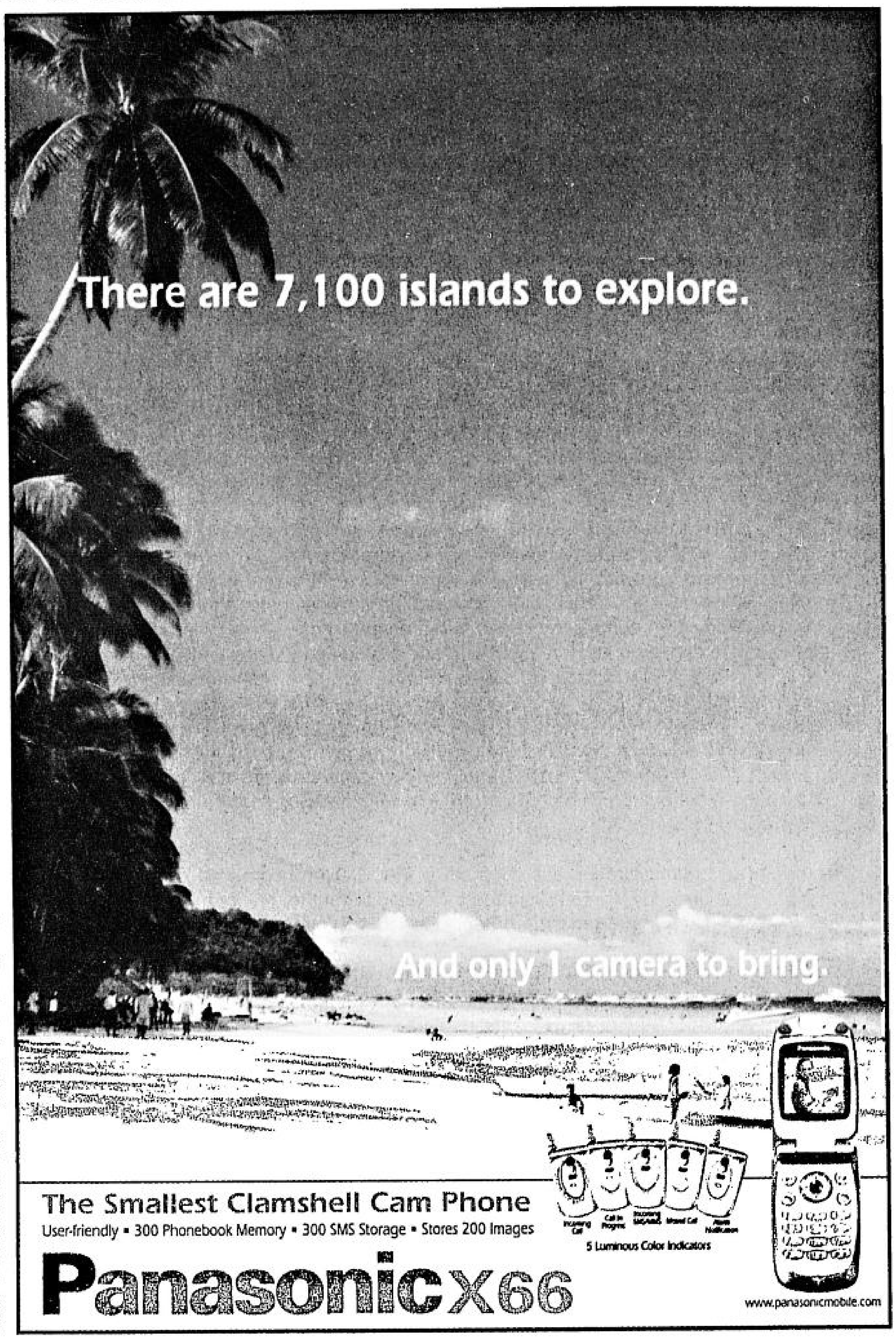
Joaquin was a "great writer ... (and the) Santa Claus of waiters and taxi drivers," Dalena said. And then, holding back tears, he addressed his departed friend: "*Mami-miss kita, Nick. Ikaw ang batingaw sa aking kabingihan* (I will miss you Nick, you were the echo in my deafness)."

Poet and journalist Jose "Pete" Lacaba recalled that Joaquin hated tributes and eulogies, and had told friends he wanted his body to be "wrapped in a *banig* (sleeping mat) and thrown into the Pasig River" when he died.

Joaquin loved to sing and joke around when he was alive, Lacaba said, and when friends learned of his death, "jokes were passed around through text messages ..., (referring) to his love for beer, and to how there was a lack of it in heaven."

During the interment rites at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo joined Joaquin's family and friends as an Army battalion and brass band in gala uniform marched in front of the horse-drawn carriage bearing the urn.

The late national artist was honored with three volleys of gunfire as his nephew Ed Joaquin lowered the urn into the tomb before high noon. The pallbearers then gave the flag that had draped the wooden arc to Romulo, who handed it to Joaquin's sister Carmen.



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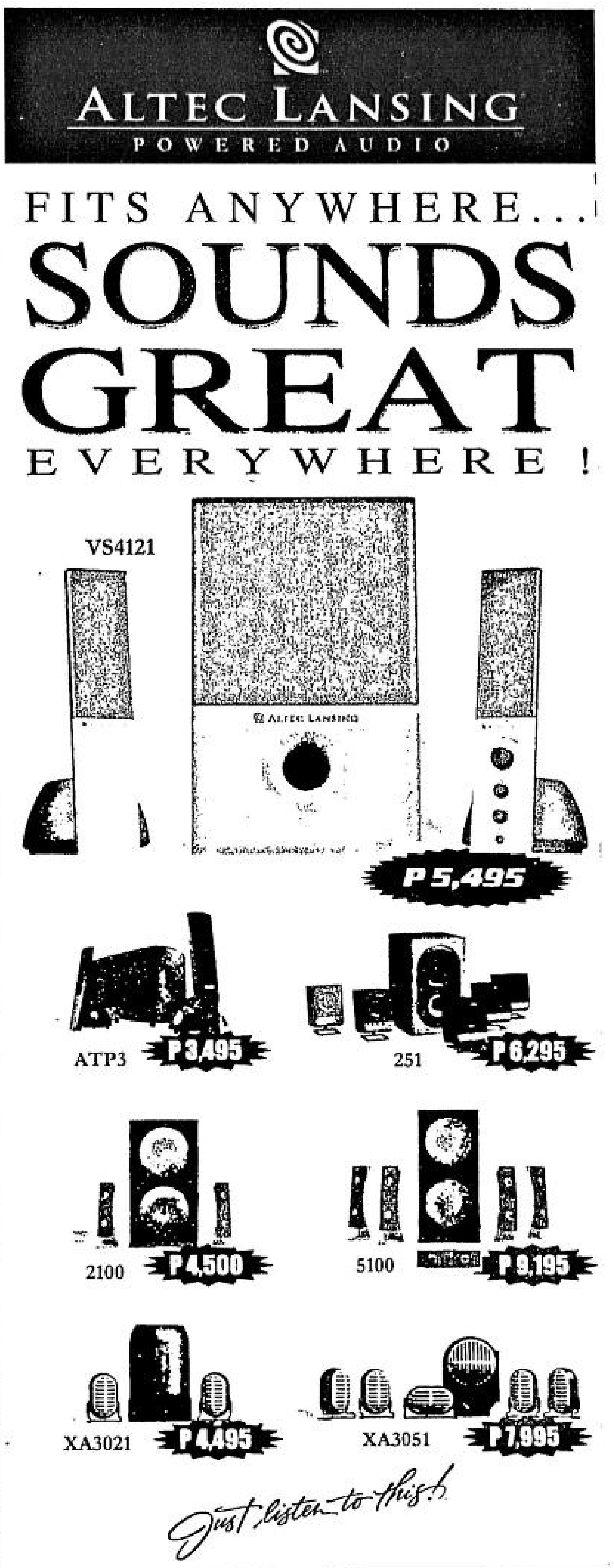

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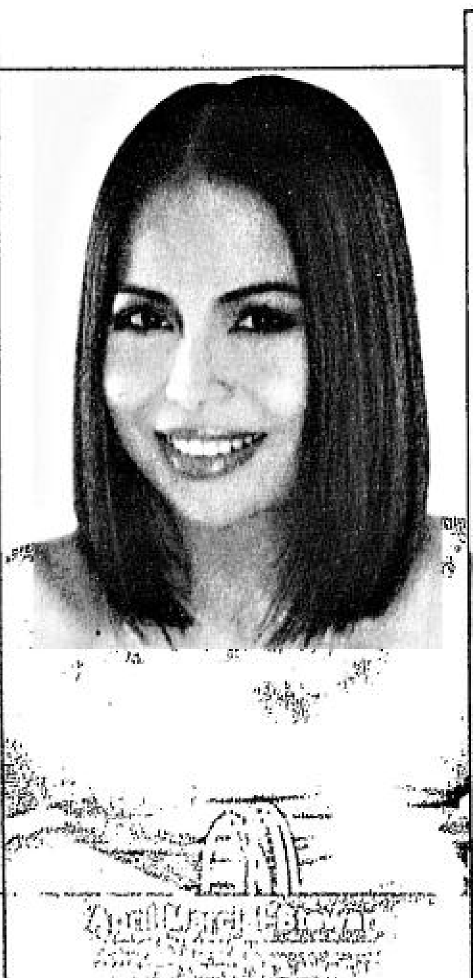

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"PAGCOR has violated its Charter by entering into joint ventures with private investors in the operation of slot machine arcades."	The PAGCOR Charter (PD 1869) prohibits the corporation from granting franchises to outside parties. PAGCOR has entered into lease contracts, not joint ventures, with lessors in the operation of exclusive, Casino Filipino VIP Clubs.
"The 60-40 income sharing agreement with private investors is disadvantageous to the government because 40 percent provided to the lessor is excessive. The cost of new slot machines and lease improvements can be recovered in full within three years."	**This lease arrangement is purely a business decision. It is risk-free for the government because PAGCOR does not shell out a single centavo. Furthermore, all lease contracts have an exit clause in case a court of law finds the agreement disadvantageous to the government.** The 38 percent (net of franchise tax) payment is for the lease of a complete, fully-furnished, fully-equipped, fitted-out Casino Filipino VIP Club. All capital expenditures – construction, furnishing and maintenance of the facility as well as the procurement of high-tech computerized gaming machines – are shouldered by the lessors. Slot machines cost about US$10,000 to $12,000 each and quickly become obsolete in less than a year. These state-of-the-art machines utilize a "tokenless" card-based system, and are connected through an integrated network. This agreement is in line with advisories stated in the 2002 General Appropriations Act which enjoins all government agencies to lease IT and IT-linked equipment in line with the existing policy to scale down expenditures.
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"The agreement between PAGCOR and the private investors is disadvantageous to the government and is, therefore, illegal."	PAGCOR's lease arrangement has been duly reviewed and approved by the PAGCOR's own Corporate Legal Services Department, the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC), Commission on Audit, and the Department of Justice. In fact, income derived through this method has already generated an additional P200 million in revenues which would not have been possible under the old business plan.
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INC could help give ...

From page A1

Eddie Villanueva—to make an impact on the election.

The INC's decision came after futile attempts to forge a united opposition through the merger of the forces of Poe and Sen. Panfilo Lacson. Sources close to the INC have told the INQUIRER that the INC leaders had been exasperated by the failure of Poe and Lacson to even establish a dialogue, despite warnings issued by the sect's leaders that time had already run out on the opposition's unity moves and that unless Lacson and Poe were united, no one of them can win, let alone reverse the tide driving Ms Macapagal's campaign.

Shrewd move

The INC's decision is a pragmatic and shrewd move. It came after a series of opinion surveys during the past three weeks. Surveys had shown that Poe's ratings were sliding while those of Ms Macapagal were rising to a point that by late April, one survey had given her a nine-point lead over Poe.

Although the INC's bloc vote, estimated to be between two and four million, is significant in deciding a closely contested election, its leaders are historically known to support a presidential candidate who is widely perceived to be the winner.

Apparently, the INC was not impervious to the survey results. It is not in the habit of backing losers. It has always disclosed its endorsement on the eve of elections, at a time when it is clear which way the tide is flowing.

Its shrewd political calculation reflects trends shown by the opinion polls. Thus, its backing of six K-4 senatorial candidates and six KNP senatorial candidates reflects its balancing act.

The INC's endorsement of a winning presidential candidate serves to reinforce the belief that the sect is a political force that cannot be ignored, that its support is critical for electoral victory and that Ms Macapagal and her allies will be incurring a political debt to the sect.

The strategic significance of the sect's endorsement illustrates how the electoral process has been held hostage by minority political groups holding a large number of disciplined votes. It represents the decay of formal political institutions, such as political parties which, in strong democratic states, determine political the outcome by organizing and mobilizing political support during elections.

The INC playing a decisive role was facilitated by the fact that the opposition ran a highly personalized campaign on the basis of Poe's charisma, not on organizational strength or programs. This type of campaign made it vulnerable to collapse as soon as it developed that Poe's charisma deriving from the actor's movie box-office popularity was not working.

Poe himself vitiated such a charismatic role by refusing to engage in debate and shunning public exposure and examination of his programs.

Different strategy

By contrast, the Macapagal administration took a different strategy. It ran a highly focused campaign based on issues and a tightly operated party organization, which extended its reach to all the congressional districts. The administration machine was not hampered by internal bickering that has crippled the opposition since the start of the campaign.

The collapse of the opposition's campaign offers a good lesson. The Macapagal administration has learned from the 1998 campaign when the once dominant Lakas coalition was so disorganized that it crumbled before the wave of Estrada's popularity.

In the beginning of the election campaign, Poe rode on the crest of a high popularity rating, prompting his camp to believe that organization was not important and that Poe's charisma would make a unified opposition coalition unnecessary.

The opposition had an organization—Sen. Edgardo Angara's Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino—that served as a vehicle, but bickering between Poe and Lascon undermined the campaign. A series of blunders by Poe melted his charisma as he collided with the more focused program and issue-oriented thrust of the Macapagal campaign.

When the poll surveys began to show that Poe's support was waning and Ms Macapagal was overtaking him, the opposition had no answer to reverse her gains. As perception widened that Ms Macapagal could win, Poe also began to lose financial support from the business community which sensed a Macapagal victory and made clear its preference and where its confidence went.

The INC swing makes a large Macapagal victory possible. The President has started considering a majority that can give her a clear mandate.

The bandwagon effect can only become stronger in the remaining days of the election. It can be contagious. It can erase whatever lingering support remains with Raul Roco's bedraggled ranks and Bro. Eddie Villanueva's vanishing tribe of born-again mesmerized adherents.

Joker tells voters ...

From page A1

incumbent President who is hounded by the opposition with charges of abetting corruption and an aspirant who is totally unprepared for the demands and complexities of the presidency," the senator said.

Arroyo took exception to Poe's position on graft and corruption and how he intended to address it. Poe was quoted as saying, "*Dadaan muna sila sa butas ng karayom* (They would have to pass through the eye of a needle)."

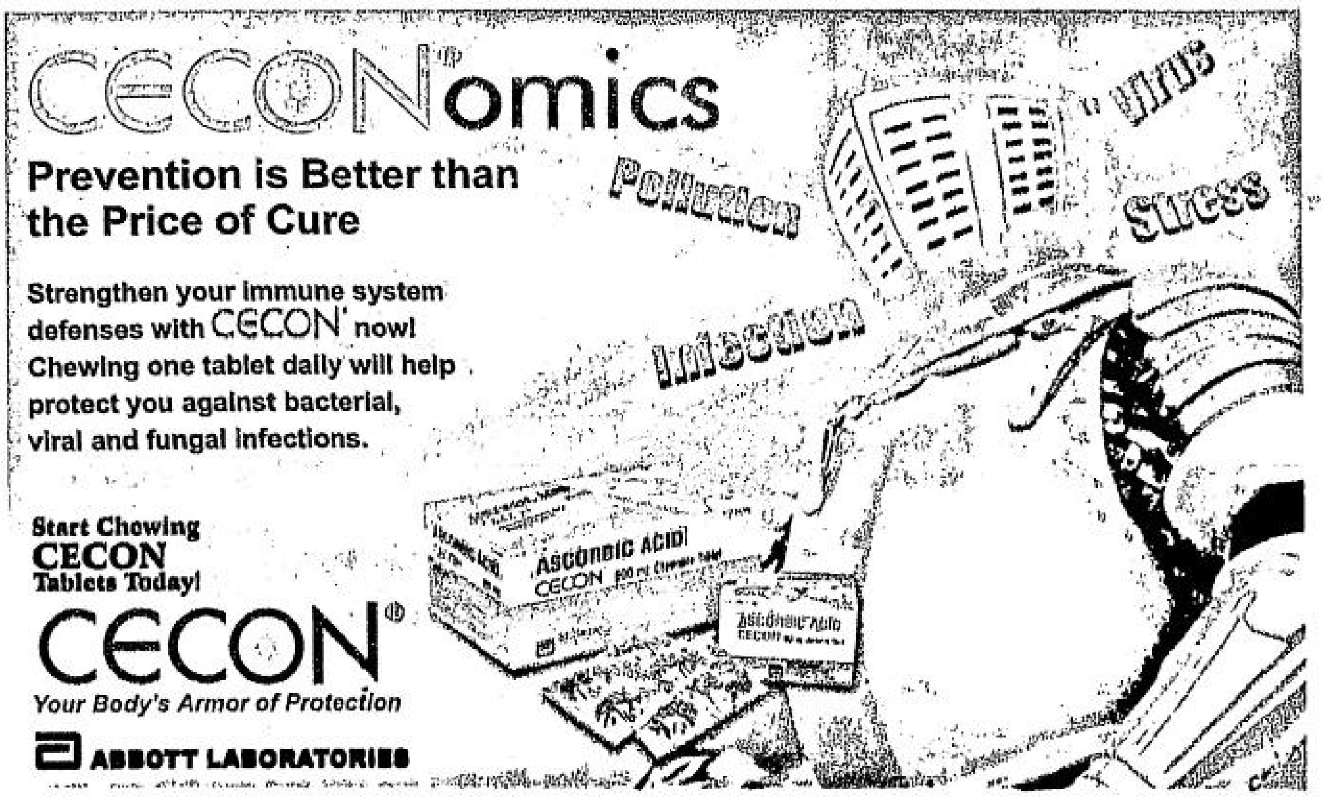
"What kind of answer is that? This is another one of FPJ's trademark cinematic exhortations—tiresome and terribly vacuous," Arroyo said.

He said that while Ms Macapagal had already taken a stand on public issues such as the Philippine participation in the Iraq war, foreign debt, the budget deficit, the Marcos ill-gotten wealth, the coconut levy funds, environmental issues, among others, Poe had yet to discuss his position at length.

"It is exactly six days before the campaign period ends or 82 days since the campaign period started and (Poe) has yet to articulate his views, much less take a stand on various significant public issues. We can only divine what is on the mind of Mr. Poe because he has chosen to be indifferent and taciturn," Arroyo said.

"We can only deduce that his reluctance to talk is because he feels inadequate to say his piece or that he is playing safe by not talking. Either way, it is not fair to the electorate," he said.

Norman Bordadora



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Erap visits mother as she turns 99

FORMER President Joseph Estrada was flown by helicopter on Sunday from the army camp where he is detained to join his ailing mother for her 99th birthday celebration, court officials said.

The Sandiganbayan anti-graft court granted Estrada—who is on trial on corruption charges—a 36-hour furlough to allow him to be with his mother at her home in Greenhills, San Juan, court sheriff Ed Urieta said. He was to be returned to jail on Monday.

"Under the court order, he could not get out of the house, even go to his own home a few blocks away or give interviews," Urieta said.

Estrada's mother hugged him and whispered in his ear during their emotional reunion, witnesses at the scene said.

Outside the house, police special forces, a bomb squad and anti-riot officers took up positions amid concern Estrada's supporters might gather and stage an anti-government protest.

The furlough was the latest of a stream of requests filed by Estrada's lawyers to get him out of detention, at least temporarily, since his ouster in 2001 over graft and corruption charges. AP

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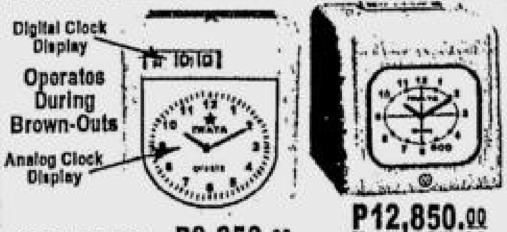

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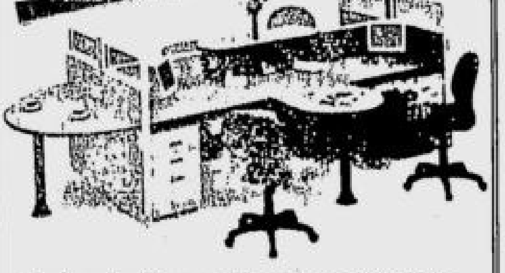

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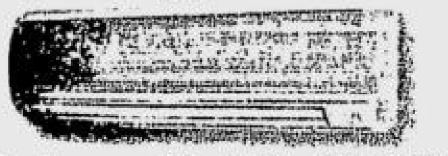

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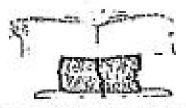

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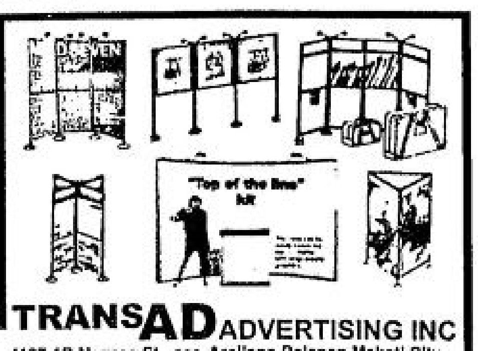

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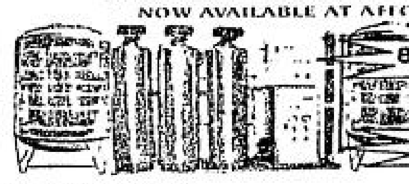

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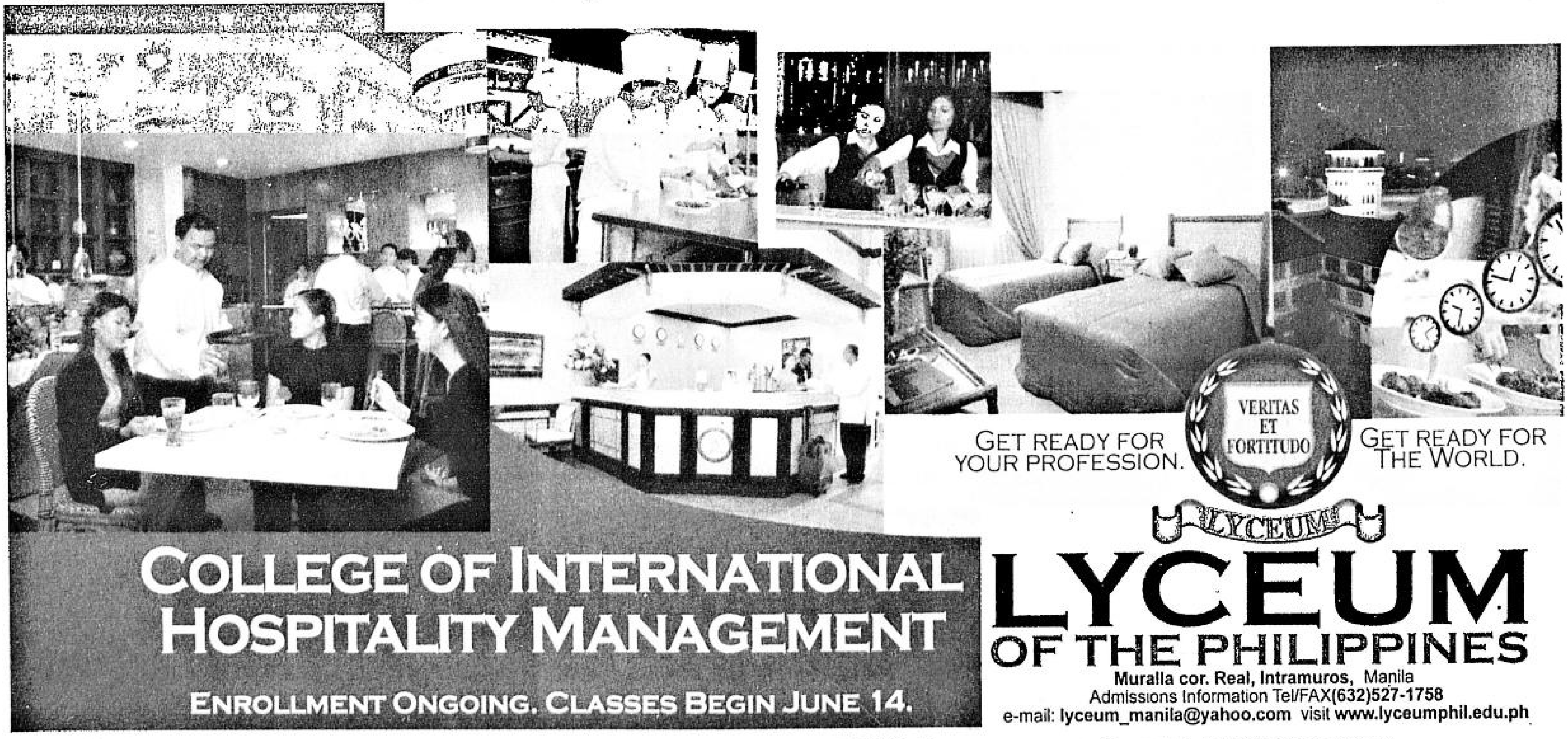

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From page A1

lim Democrats and its allied parties, and those drawn by Ms Macapagal's own personal appeal.

Taking stock of all these, De Venecia said Ms Macapagal could post a lead of at least five million votes over her closest challenger. "We're hoping for more," a confident De Venecia said, adding "we now have a major and inexorable lead."

Luis Sison, an area leader of the Couples for Christ, said the group was not endorsing any presidential candidate. "If the Couples for Christ endorses as a group, I will resign as a member because that's not the way we are."

Sison, spokesperson of Bro. Eddie Villanueva, a presidential candidate, said the members of Couples for Christ "are left to their individual choices."

The President's campaign spokesperson Michael Defensor shared De Venecia's bravado.

"The INC support would make the President's standing invincible," Defensor said in an interview with reporters in Malacañang yesterday.

According to Palace sources, Ms Macapagal is scheduled to meet INC chief minister Eraño Manalo at about 8:30 a.m. today at the sect's Central Temple in Diliman, Quezon City.

The INC and El Shaddai threw their support behind then Vice President Joseph Estrada in the 1998 presidential election that saw the former actor win by a landslide.

Administration sources claimed that El Shaddai will announce its support for Ms Macapagal between May 3 and 6.

El Shaddai spokesperson Mel Robles said the group's founder, Mike Velarde, who is said to command the vote of some 1.5 million members, would "let his candidate be known" either today or tomorrow.

Robles said it would not be surprising if Velarde would support Ms Macapagal, who has been wooing the group's votes since late last year.

"I know they are talking. That would not be surprising, (if El Shaddai supports the President). Let us wait for the official announcement," Robles said.

He said Velarde and Ms Macapagal had lunch last week, but he did not say exactly what they discussed. The President was the special guest at the El Shaddai's Palm Sunday gathering last month.

For the second straight day, opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. decided to keep his silence on reports that the INC was endorsing Ms Macapagal. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

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Bar Matter No. 850 and its implementing rules provide, among others, that failure to comply with the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) 36-unit requirement at the end of the compliance period shall be a cause for listing a lawyer as a delinquent member and consequently, he shall not be permitted to practice law. The first compliance period had ended last April 14, 2004. The MCLE Committee of the Supreme Court has extended the compliance period by 60 days from said date. To afford lawyers the opportunity to fully comply with the MCLE requirement, we are sponsoring the following Lecture Series:

Date/Time	Subject Classification/ MCLE Credit Units (CU)	Lecturer	Subject
May 15, 2004 8:00 -10:00 am	Legal Writing & Oral Advocacy (2 CU)	Justice Magdangal M. De Leon *Associate Justice, Court of Appeals*	Oral Advocacy
May 15, 2004 10:15 –12:15 pm	International Law (2 CU)	Atty. Ronaldo P. Ledesma *Head, Board of Special Inquiry, BI*	International Law and the Admission of Aliens
May 15, 2004 1:00 – 3:00 pm	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws& Jurisprudence (2CU)	Justice Diosdado M. Peralta *Associate Justice, Sandiganbayan*	Updates in Criminal Law
May 15, 2004 3:15 – 6:15 pm	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws & Jurisprudence (3 CU)	Justice Regalado E. Maambong *Associate Justice, Court of Appeals*	Updates in Constitutional Law and Election Law
May 22, 2004 8:00 –10:00 am	Updates in Substantive & Procedural laws & Jurisprudence (2 CU)	Dean Froilan M. Bacungan *Former Dean, UP College of Law*	Updates in Labor Law
May 22, 2004 10:15-12:15 pm	Trial & Pre-Trial Skills (2CU)	Justice Noel G. Tijam *Associate Justice, Court of Appeals*	Pre-Trial Skills: Civil & Criminal Cases
May 22, 2004 1:00 - 3:00 pm	Trial & Pre-Trial Skills (2CU)	Justice Edilberto G. Sandoval *Associate Justice, Sandiganbayan*	Trial Technique: The Art of Direct & Cross Examination
May 22, 2004 3:15 - 6:15 pm	Alternative Dispute Resolution (3 CU)	Prof. Mario Valderrama *Commercial Arbitrator*	Alternative Dispute Resolution
May 29, 2004 8:00 – 10:00 am	Alternative Dispute Resolution (2 CU)	Dean Custodio O. Parlade *Commercial Arbitrator*	International & Domestic Arbitration
May 29, 2004 10:15-12:15 pm	Legal Writing & Oral Advocacy (2 CU)	Justice Hugo E. Gutierrez *Associate Justice, SC (Ret.)*	Legal Writing
May 29, 2004 1:00 – 4:00 pm	Legal Ethics (3 CU)	Justice Hector L. Hofileña *Associate Justice, CA (Ret.)*	Updates in Legal Ethics
May 29, 2004 4:15 – 6:15 pm	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws & Jurisprudence (2 CU)	Justice Ruben T. Reyes *Associate Justice, Court of Appeals*	Updates in Procedural Law Jurisprudence
June 5, 2004 8:00 – 10:00 am	MCLE-Prescribed Subject: Environmental Law (2 CU)	Atty. Antonio Oposa *IBP Chairperson – National Environmental Action Team*	Environmental Law
June 5, 2004 10:15 – 12:15 pm	MCLE-Prescribed Subject: Law and Economics (2 CU)	Prof. Harry Roque, Jr. *UP – College of Law*	Law and Economics
June 5, 2004 1:00 – 4:00 pm	Legal Ethics (3 CU)	Justice Ruben T. Reyes *Associate Justice, Court of Appeals*	Problem Areas in Legal Ethics
June 5, 2004 4:15 – 6:15 pm	MCLE-Prescribed Subject: Law & Technology (2 CU)	Justice Regalado E. Maambong *Associate Justice, Court of Appeals*	Essentials of Forensic Ballistics, Questioned Documents & Fingerprinting
TOTAL	36		

Date/Day/Time: May 15, 22, 29 and June 05, 2004, Saturday, from 8:00 am to 6:15 pm
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Noli acts on killings in Oriental Mindoro

VICE presidential candidate Sen. Noli de Castro has asked the Philippine National Police to investigate the series of killings in Oriental Mindoro after another leftist group official was slain last Wednesday.

"What have you been doing on these series of political assassinations in Mindoro? Solve them instantly and have the culprits face the full harshness of the law," De Castro, a native of the province, told PNP Regional Director Gen. Alejandro Lapinid in a phone call on Friday.

The latest death was that of Isaias Maano, Anakpawis secretary general for the province, who was shot dead on his way to the party-list group's headquarters in Calapan City.

The series of killings began with the twin murders of Mindoro-based human rights lawyer Juvy Magsino and activist Leima Fortu on Feb. 13, 2004. Lapinid told De Castro the PNP would be announcing the results of its investigation into the murders soon.

De Castro also asked the police to provide ample protection to party-list organizers in Oriental Mindoro and maintain law and order in the province, after he was criticized by Anakpawis national president Rafael Mariano for failing to follow-up on his earlier promise to have the killings investigated.

"Tighten security and increase police and military visibility in the area. This would prevent the enemies of democracy and the law from carrying out their evil plans," De Castro told Lapinid.

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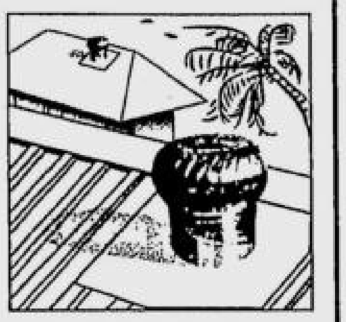
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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Saudi militants in shooting rampage kill 5 Westerners

RIYADH—Militants in Saudi Arabia took their battle against pro-US Saudi rulers to a new level by targeting vital economic facilities in the Gulf state, killing five Westerners in a shooting spree in an oil city.

Saturday's attack in the industrial hub of Yanbu was the first to target a petrochemical complex in the country, the world's largest oil exporter.

Saudi Arabia said the shooting was carried out by workers who used their passes to access the tightly secured site and gun down the five engineers—two Americans, two Britons and an Australian employed by Swiss-based firm ABB Lummus.

Another American and a Canadian were injured. The four gunmen were later killed in clashes with police. Two officers also died and 18 were injured.

Riyadh has cracked down on militants linked to Saudi-born Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida group since a series of suicide bombings on residential compounds in the capital last year killed 50 people, including nine Americans.

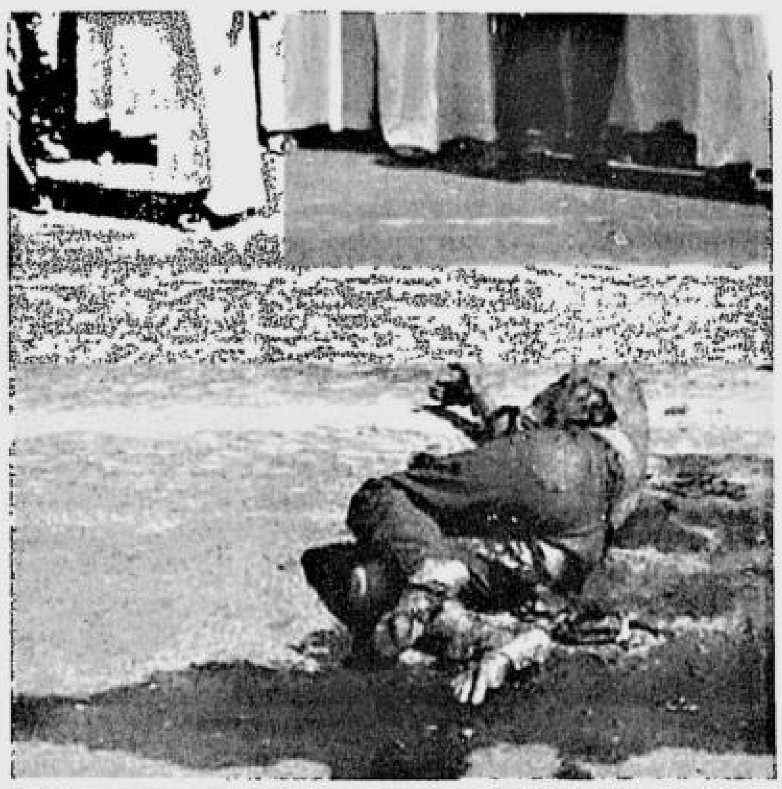
Despite the arrest or killing of suspects, militants appear determined to heed calls by al-Qaida leaders and widen the conflict by striking sophisticated and vital targets in their bid to destabilize what they see as "apostate" rulers allied with the United States.

Last month, a suspected al-Qaida suicide bomber destroyed a police headquarters in Riyadh and killed five people in the first major attack on a government target.

In Saturday's attacks, witnesses said the gunmen also dragged the body of a Westerner through the streets of Yanbu but the report could not be independently confirmed.

Top Saudi al-Qaida leader Abdulaziz al-Muqrin has called for the bodies of Americans to be dragged through Saudi streets, urged fighters to expel "infidel" Americans from the birthplace of Islam and target security forces who stand in their way.

"God willing, the day will come when bodies of Americans and Jews will be dragged, humiliated and trampled in the Arabian peninsula, them and their tyrants and allies. The day will come, God willing, when we will destroy their bases over their heads and kick them out of our land," one statement by Muqrin said. *Reuters*



A SUSPECTED militant lies on the ground after being killed during an attack at a Western engineering firm in the Saudi oil and petrochemical hub of Yanbu in the Red Sea May 1. REUTERS

4 US soldiers killed in separate attacks in Iraq, raising toll to 746

NAJAF, Iraq—Shiite militiamen attacked a US convoy in southern Iraq, killing two soldiers and setting vehicles on fire, even as mediators were trying Sunday to find a resolution to the US standoff with the militia's leader. Two other American soldiers were killed in Baghdad.

The convoy attack came Saturday evening outside the city of Amarah, 300 km south of the capital, when gunmen loyal to radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr opened fire with small arms and rocket-propelled grenades, a US military official said.

A number of Humvees and trucks were in flames on the road outside the city hours later, witnesses said.

British forces battled members of al-Sadr's al-Mahdi Army militia for 12 hours in Amarah in fighting that lasted until early Sunday and left five Iraqis dead and eight British soldiers wounded.

The clash began when gunmen attacked a British patrol, wounding one soldier, said a British military spokesperson. Five more troops were wounded as a team rescued the first man, said British Royal Air Force Squadron Leader Jonathan Arnold, a military spokesperson.

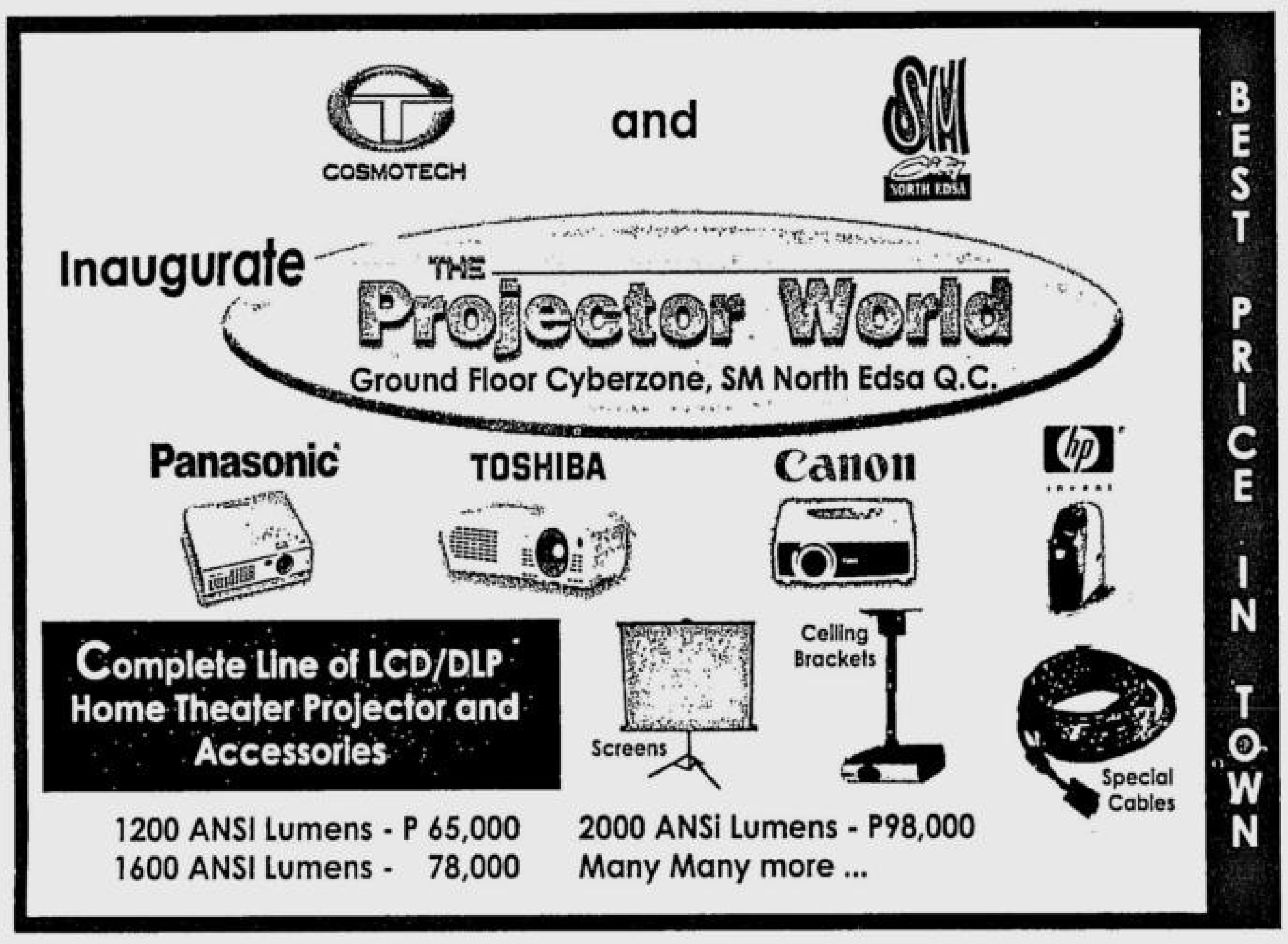
In the evening, the fighting revived when insurgents fired mortar shells and rocket-propelled grenades at the British base in the city, and British soldiers lobbed flares into the night sky to illuminate and fire on the attackers. Two more British soldiers were wounded. Witnesses said two British trucks were burned in the fighting. An Iraqi civilian working on the base was wounded by shrapnel from an exploding mortar shell, the British military said.

Two more US soldiers were killed before dawn Sunday in an attack in northwest Baghdad that also wounded two Iraqi security officers and another American, the military said, without providing details on the attack.

The deaths raised the US death toll to 144 since a wave of violence began on April 1. At least 746 US troops have died in Iraq since the war began in March 2003. Up to 1,200 Iraqis also have been killed this month.

Meanwhile, Marines who pulled back from enforcing a cordon on the southern Fallujah had returned to their previous duties, patrolling villages away from the city, giving way to a newly created Iraqi brigade that the Americans said would root out die-hard guerrillas in the Sunni militant stronghold.

The new "Fallujah Brigade," put together by former Saddam Hussein-era generals, will likely include some former army soldiers who fought against the Marines over the past month, US Marine Lt. Gen. James Conway said. AP



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Iraq prisoners faced 'sadistic' abuses, says magazine

WASHINGTON—Iraqi prisoners faced numerous "sadistic, blatant and wanton criminal abuses" by US soldiers, including sodomy and beatings, according to a US Army report quoted by the New Yorker magazine.

The New Yorker said it had obtained a 53-page, internal US military report into alleged abuses at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison outside Baghdad. In an article posted on its website on Saturday, the magazine said the report had been authorized by Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, the top US officer in Iraq, and was completed in February.

The May 10 issue of the magazine goes on sale on Monday.

The army report listed abuses such as "breaking chemical lights and pouring the phosphoric liquid on detainees; beating detainees with a broom handle and a chair; threatening male detainees with rape; allowing a military police guard to stitch the wound of a detainee who was injured after being slammed against the wall in his cell; sodomizing a detainee with a chemical light and perhaps a broom stick."

Written by Maj. Gen. Antonio Taguba, the report said evidence included "detailed witness statements and the discovery of extremely graphic photographic evidence."

Pentagon spokesperson Bryan Whitman declined to comment on the article, but said, "We take all reports of detainee abuse seriously and all allegations are thoroughly investigated."

He said that when incidents of abuse came to light earlier this year, the army immediately ordered an investigation, and Sanchez ordered a separate probe to ensure such incidents were not widespread in the military detention system in Iraq. *Reuters*

New Internet worm spreading

STOCKHOLM—A new Internet worm is spreading worldwide and has probably already infected millions of computers, a Finnish anti-virus expert told AFP Saturday.

The Sasser worm can infect any computer that is switched on and connected to an Internet service provider, and unlike most other worms or viruses is not spread by e-mail, said Mikko Hyppoenen, head of anti-virus research at the Finnish Internet security firm F-Secure.

"This is one of few worms that spreads automatically. It is enough for your PC to be on," he told AFP in a telephone interview from Helsinki.

The worm typically shuts down the computer then automatically re-boots it, repeating the procedure several times. Hyppoenen said computers behind a firewall should be spared from the attack.

He stressed that the worm, while inconvenient, was otherwise harmless and other experts said it was relatively simple to destroy.

"This worm does not have any criminal intentions, unlike the Bagle and Sobig viruses we saw earlier (this year) which took control of computers by opening back doors to send spam. Sasser doesn't do anything," he said.

"The Blaster virus in August 2003 infected millions of computers ... this time there could possibly be more computers infected," Hyppoenen added, however. *AFP*

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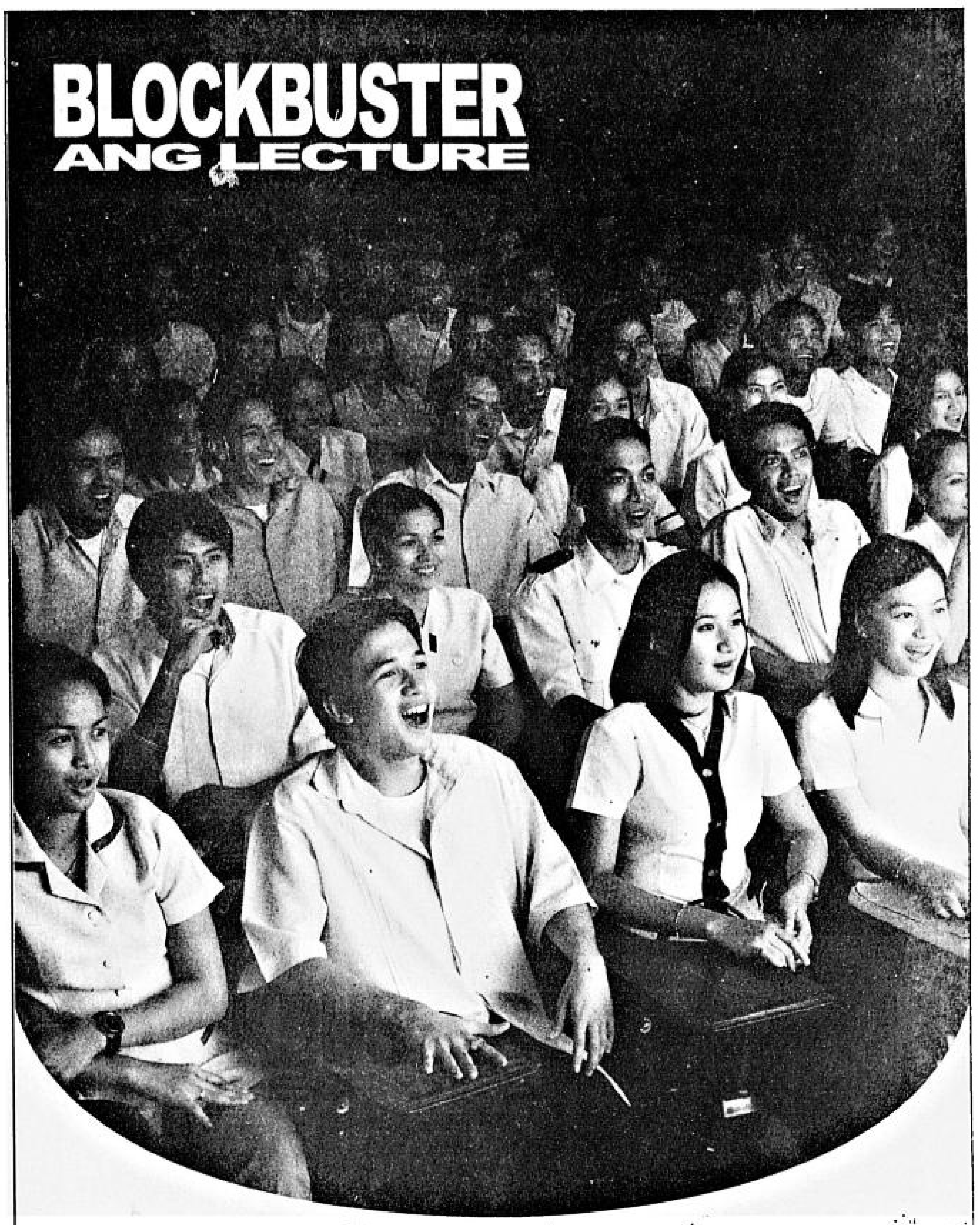

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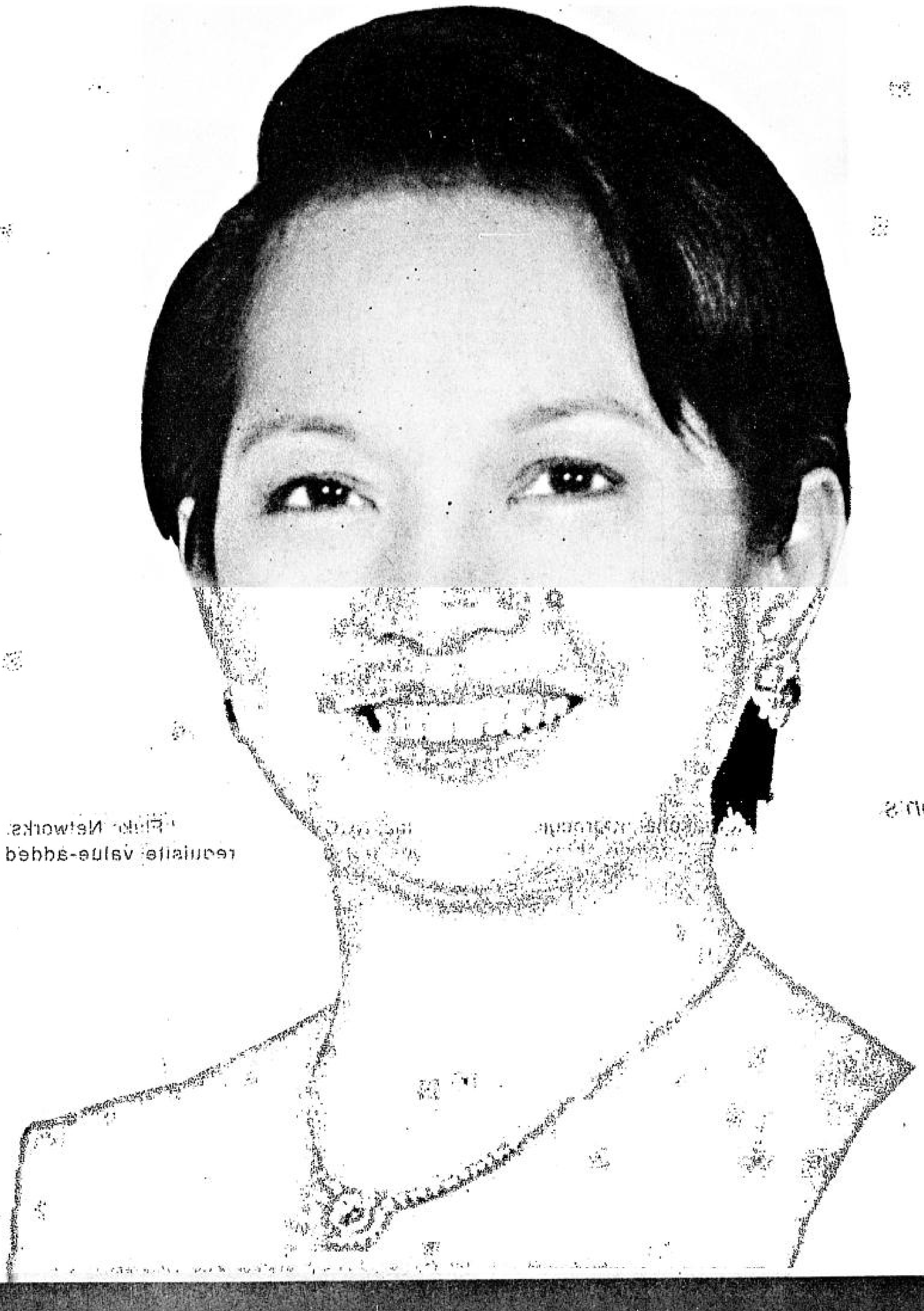

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PERIOD	AMOUNT OF INVESTMENTS (IN BILLION PESOS)	GROWTH RATE %	NEW JOBS CREATED IN IT
2000 (Previous)	4,690		10,000
2001-2003 (GMA)	48.260	924.73%	108,400

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ISSN 0116-2642
INQUIRER
Vol. 19 No. 145
Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph website: http://www.inq7.net

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

Publisher **Isagani Yambot**
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A free press?

EDITORIAL

FOR the Filipino news consumer, the World Association of Newspapers' choice of theme for this year's Press Freedom Day is unsurprising. Yes, "Press Freedom Pays," because in our democratic experiment our newsmen become popular enough to run for vice president.

It is certain that one of two TV presenters in the running will win the post in next week's elections. Many other candidates for other elective office have held jobs in media, or at least proudly include "anchor" or "journalist" or "columnist" in their curriculum vitae. Isn't all this an affirmation that, in the Philippines, the people know and appreciate the true value of a free press?

Sadly, the answer is "No." The emergence of a popular media elite in the Philippine context does not mean that democratic institutions are necessarily being strengthened. What WAN means when it says that press freedom pays is that a free press fosters democracy, "the political system which is best placed to achieve and maintain the prosperity and peace, which is the legitimate aspiration of all human beings."

But in the Philippines, the making of media celebrities and the rise of media institutions as centers of power in their own right have come at the expense, or as a result of the weakening, of public institutions. The reason many people repose their trust, their deepest hopes, in television anchors or radio commentators is precisely because government agencies, or sometimes even the political system itself, have steadily lost the public's confidence.

In part, we are victims of our own great expectations. When the river of people power swept the Marcoses from Malacañang, we all expected that the Augean stables of our politics would be cleansed too. But apparently not even Hercules himself could have been up to the task. The euphoria over Edsa II, the second time the river of people power spilled its banks, was even more short-lived, the disappointment more dispiriting.

In the last decade and a half, however, at the very same time that the country staggered from one political crisis to another, media organizations assumed an unprecedented importance in public life. It wasn't enough that the media gave comfort to the afflicted, and afflicted the comfortable, as the journalistic axiom had it; for many Filipinos, the TV channel they watched and the radio show they listened to were the only source of comfort in the face of bleak news, the only means of retaliation against the corrupt and the inept.

Some politicians and government officials took to aping the media; in fact, many wangled positions in media even after being elected to office, writing columns or serving as commentators or hosting magazine shows.

The rise of a popular media elite was not a simple spike in the chart; the line of growth had ups and downs. When ABS-CBN broadcaster Noli de Castro ran for the Senate in 2001, he won 16 million votes and topped the race. But both longtime radio and TV personality Rey Langit and TV host Jay Sonza lost in their first crack at the Senate. (It must be said that millions still voted for them, a remarkable feat, considering the humble origins and plain nature of the profession.)

The trend since the democratic restoration in 1986, however, is unmistakable. Instead of shooting the messengers of increasingly bad news, the public opened its doors, welcoming them inside the house.

But when a citizen with a valid complaint repairs to the media because, he says, that is the only way he can get justice, democracy's alarm bells must start ringing. It is the responsibility of the courts to administer justice. When the public confuses the role of media with that of government, short-term relief may be at hand, but the damage to the democratic experiment is long-term.

Press freedom pays not when media's role turns broadcast journalists into popular personalities, but when it strengthens the democratic process.

Spain's withdrawal

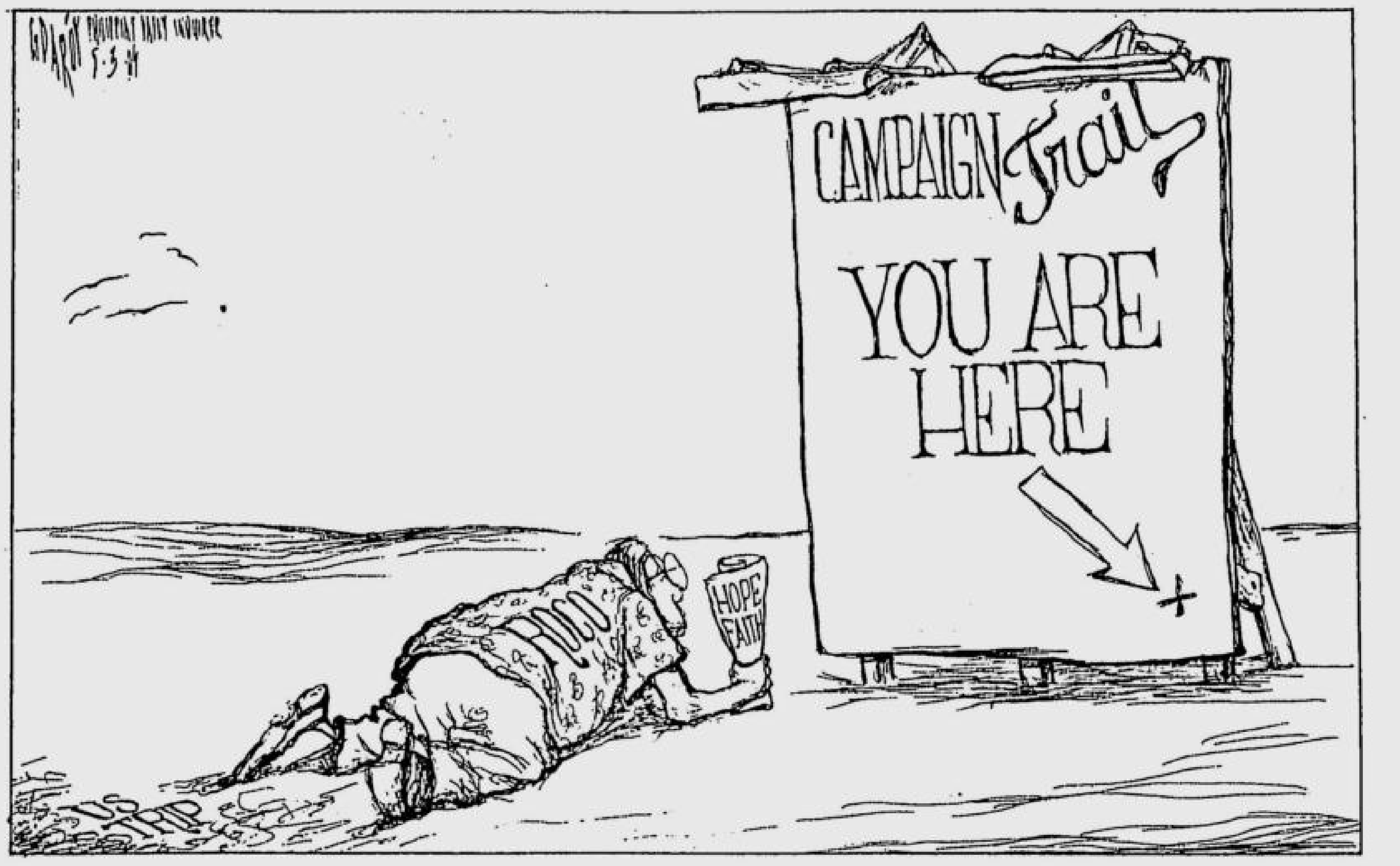
FOREIGN COMMENT

WHEN Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero announced the fulfillment of his campaign pledge regarding the Spanish troops in Iraq, the United States responded scornfully by denying any military impact on the withdrawal.

But the problem that the Spanish withdrawal raises is not so much the military order but politics.

For President George W. Bush, the problem is not on our withdrawal, but the evidence that the people in Iraq reject their troops.

El Periodico de Catalunya (Barcelona, Spain)



A portrait of the artist as journalist

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THEY laid to rest the ashes of writer Nick Joaquin at the Libingan ng mga Bayani yesterday, against his wishes that they be scattered in his beloved Pasig River. Joaquin died appropriately on the Eve of May, a few days short of his 87th birth anniversary. It was a beautiful death: quiet, peaceful, coming in his sleep, without pain, without being sick, without being attended to by doctors, after a last visit to his equally beloved Intramuros—perhaps reminiscing to his niece the lives and loves of the souls who once lived there—and adored by his countrymen. A person cannot ask for a better death.

Joaquin is the greatest Filipino writer, barring none. In the introduction to Joaquin's first collection of his works, "Prose and Poems," Teodoro M. Locsin, another great writer, wrote: "Nick Joaquin, one might as well say it right at the start, is the first literary artist of the country. No Filipino now writing matches his stories in power and beauty…"

Joaquin was among the first awardees of the National Artist Award, back when its awarding was not attended by controversy, for there was no doubt that he was the best among the best. The pool of Filipino writers has dwindled since then, for which reason some people could not accept some of the more recent awardees.

The editors of the INQUIRER made a wise decision in reprinting, in two parts (on April 30 and May 1), Joaquin's acceptance speech of August 1996, for the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism, Literature and Creative Communication Arts.

The piece was titled "Journalism vs. Literature," and explains clearly why and how the distinction between the two has blurred. Joaquin was both a journalist (as Quijano de Manila) and a littérateur (as Nick Joaquin).

Journalism, wrote Joaquin, is the best training ground for writers. "The so-called creative writer," he wrote, "tends to be too subjective, too obsessed with himself. That is why I think every aspiring young writer should spend some years as a news reporter, so he will be obliged to step out of his own private world and to experience the world outside. This will not only train him to be observant and objective, it may also save him from eccentricity, the danger that faces every creative writer."

Indeed, many of the world's greatest writers, he correctly pointed out, were former journalists, foremost among them Nobel and Pulitzer prize-winner Ernest Hemingway, four of whose books are reportage: "Death in the Afternoon," and "The Dangerous Summer," both about bullfighting, "Green Hills of Africa," about big-game hunting in Africa, and "A Moveable Feast," about his early years in Paris. (There is a fifth, "True at First Light," also about hunting in Africa, published posthumously.)

In a new genre called "The New Journalism," top writers are writing journalism disguised as fiction, that is, reportage written like a novel. A prime example is Truman Capote's "In Cold Blood," which he called "a non-fiction novel" and which, wrote Joaquin, "may outlive his actual fiction." Other notable practitioners of the genre are Norman Mailer, Gore Vidal, John Updike. Their works have been collected in several volumes called "The New Journalism." One of the first practitioners of this genre was literary critic and novelist Edmund Wilson whose article on the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the desert was first published as reportage in The New Yorker.

I think Joaquin's piece should have been titled "Journalism or Fiction Writing?" because that is the issue now—whether "literature" should include only "fiction" to the exclusion of "non-fiction" and "journalism." It is true one of the definitions of "literature" found in the dictionary is "all writing considered as having permanent value, excellence of form, great emotional effect, etc." However, the more accepted definition is "all writings in prose or verse, esp. those of an imaginative (fiction) or critical character (literary criticism, hence non-fiction), without regard to their excellence, often distinguished from scientific writing, news reporting, etc."

But as I wrote in this column during the controversies over the giving of the National Artist Award for Literature to Carlos Quirino, a historian, and Alejandro Roces, a journalist, the concept of "fiction only" as literature is fairly recent, traced to the 19th century. Before that, "literature" carried the first definition I cited.

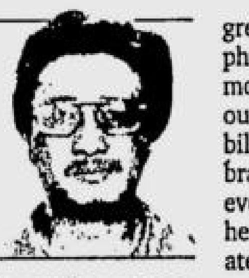
Now the pendulum has swung back. Fiction writing is on the decline while journalism, both print and broadcast, is becoming more popular. Proof: When you go to a bookstore, count the shelves for books of fiction and those of non-fiction. The non-fiction shelves outnumber the fiction shelves 10 to 1. Newspapers and magazines sell by the millions of copies every day, while fiction bestsellers sell only tens of thousands for months and years.

Joaquin correctly pointed out that before the war, the popular American magazines had four or five works of fiction and some poetry. "Today the reverse is true," Joaquin said. "The bulk of the contents of these magazines is now formed by its reportage, its factual articles. Journalism has taken over, literature has almost disappeared. No more poetry or fiction: the popular press is now exclusively devoted to non-fiction."

In the Philippines, only one weekly still publishes short stories (the Philippines Free Press). In the past, all the Sunday supplements did that; now all of them publish only journalism.

Irreplaceable

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

ONE is tempted to say let's take time out from the elections to talk about Nick Joaquin. But that is not quite correct. The time out is not Nick Joaquin, it is the elections. The more important thing in life, or death, is not the elections, it is Nick Joaquin. That is the proper order of the universe.

First, Nick Joaquin the writer. There is no question, he was the best writer of his generation, and probably well beyond. Nick's language was lush and evocative, and the energy with which it pulsed through his works—short stories, poems, novels, plays—was a joy to behold. I remember ages ago hearing someone differentiate his style from those who copied him, the latter even more extravagant in their language. Nick wrote like he was in high spirits, or *nakainom*, my friend said, the others wrote like they were drunk, or *lasing*. It is a major difference: In his wildest moments, Nick never lost control, he never lost the discipline, he never lost the craft.

The high spirits were induced by his favorite brew, which he swigged till the end of his days. That was San Miguel Beer, of which he was the walking advertisement. Maybe that company can help put up a Nick Joaquin Foundation? I did worry last year when Billy Lacaba, his ward, impresario and nurse, told me Nick rarely ate anymore. He just drank "Vitamin B" for breakfast, lunch, and supper. Well, I figured "Vitamin B" would make him live forever. But who knows? If anyone is going to prove that in heaven there might be beer, Nick would.

We were at 70s Bistro, it was my birthday, Noel Cabangon was playing. He badgered Noel for Cole Porter songs, but poor Noel could only say he would learn those songs and play them when Nick came back. Alas, that isn't going to happen anymore. I remember that someone offered Nick *pulutan* and he said he wasn't hungry. Someone asked him if he wanted wine, and he roared, "Wine? That is for sissies! Give me a beer." I was about to order wine for myself but asked for beer instead.

But I digress, I was talking about his craft. Nick never got to be a great novelist or poet, but he got to be a great short story writer, playwright, reporter and essayist. His language was particularly suited to his short stories, which dwelt with a lost past, in more ways that is encapsulated by "Spanish heritage," which is how some have put it. He spoke of something even more ancient than the Spanish past, a primal past that rioted underneath the Spanish-style religiosity, gentility and paternalism. A past that was more spontaneous, earthy, carnal. One that could be stoked to a raging fire by the heat of a summer's solstice or the burning moon of a May Day eve. A collection of his stories published in Australia in the 1970s bore the title, "Tropical Gothic." I still remember the smell of that freshly minted book which a friend lent to me then, a scent of heaven. "Tropical Gothic" is as best a phrase as you can get to describing his style, or world.

"Portrait of the Artist as Filipino" has been mounted so many times, and even turned into a movie, for good reason. It is one of the best plays ever written, Filipino or otherwise. The last time I think was a musical based on Rolando Tinio's translation of it. Tinio of course went ahead of Nick some years ago. Ah, but this country is being depleted horrendously: Wilfrido Nolledo, the novelist, also died a couple of months ago in the United States, which might have contributed to Nick's own decision to look for beer elsewhere. Nolledo was a good friend and protégé of his. After Nolledo died, Billy Lacaba told me, Nick fell into a depression and would not go out for days.

Which speaks volumes of Nick Joaquin the man. If he was a great writer, he was an even greater human being. Never has Shakespeare's phrase, "the milk of human kindness," applied more to anyone. He was monumentally generous not only in that he always picked up the bill after gathering people around him to celebrate life, love and writing. I don't know if he ever grasped the concept of saving, everything he got, from royalties to prize money, immediately went only to the service of Bacchus.

But it wasn't that that made him generous. He was generous with his time, his skills, his knowledge. He gave of himself more freely than anyone I know. He roared, he cajoled, he demanded to know in mock despair when someone would finally be able to write, but always fondly, always with a view to helping people, especially young writers, improve. I myself never fell under his wing, I met him much later. When I joined Asia-Philippines Leader in 1972 after dropping out of my last semester in college, Nick had just left and Greg Brilliantes had taken over. But Nick's presence continued to hover in the room, with all the stories about him. And I learned to write from reading him.

Though never a political person—Nick believed in individual heroism rather than in collective striving—he was heroic in his personal engagement of politics. He was one of the first to protest martial law by refusing to write for any publication, or do anything to legitimize Marcos, despite the repeated pleas of friends, many of whom had joined Marcos and vowed to spark a literary renaissance. Nick saw no literary future in repression, and agreed to accept the National Artist Award, which had been pressed upon him for years, only on condition Pete Lacaba was released from prison. Yes, if Nick Joaquin was a great writer, he was an even greater human being.

I no longer believe in the mantra we used to recite in the underground that everyone is dispensable, someone dies and another will come to take his place. Some people are just plain indispensable, some people are just plain irreplaceable. Nick Joaquin was.

Nick Joaquin is.

GMA hold on E class spells difference

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

WITH THE ANOINTMENT of GMA and her running mate Noli de Castro by the Iglesia ni Cristo one week before the elections, the bandwagon for President Macapagal-Arroyo has swung into full gear. According to reports circulating in the media, also in line are the endorsements anytime now of GMA by six big left-wing groups and a big rightist organization. In sharp contrast to the way various groups are falling in line behind GMA, the opposition remains in disarray and its followers are demoralized.

At this point, as a number of political pundits have been saying, it seems that the presidential race is virtually over except for the counting. The predictable net effect of all these developments is that the pressure on the local political machinery of the Lakas-K-4 coalition to hold the political line of defense could ease up considerably—unlike if the race continues to be very tight. What these recent developments also show is that, contrary to what the opposition propaganda is pushing, the administration does not have to cheat to win, which is good for our elections. Let's have credible, honest and clean elections.

* * *

What has contributed greatly to GMA's pulling away from her closest rival and thus her impending victory is the fact that she has made significant political inroads into social class E, which used to be the bailiwick of FPJ. The latest SWS survey conducted from April 10-17 showed GMA and FPJ tied at 36 percent in the preference of Class E. This was very bad for FPJ, for Class E was where he should have gotten his votes to neutralize GMA's commanding lead of 43 percent in classes ABC, versus FPJ's 10 percent there, and GMA's 34 percent versus FPJ's 31 percent in Class D. But FPJ failed to pull away in Class E, and this can be attributed to all the *pro-masa* programs that GMA's strategists launched for that social class' benefit. In Sen. Joker Arroyo's proverbial imagery, the plodding turtle has caught up with the sprinting hare and in fact, has overtaken him.

* * *

A friend of mine saw this fact for herself when she recently sent campaign materials of the senatorial candidates she was plugging for to a big squatter colony in Quezon City, right next to her parents' old place. The residents there had gone for Miriam Defensor-Santiago in 1992 and Erap in 1998. But this time, they were not very interested in the senatorial candidates; they wanted flyers and stickers of GMA! That to her was the sign that the 2004 race is over.

* * *

Running as an independent, sans party machinery and funding, is always tough, as senatorial candidate Heherson Alvarez has learned in this election. But the advantage of being "*nag-iisa*" is that he is an underdog, and Pinoys love underdogs. Moreover, political leaders and groups of various hues are adopting him, while several NGOs, which have previously identified with his environmental concerns—not to mention the thousands of families of cancer victims—are now identifying with his crusade against the cancer disease afflicting his artist-wife Cecile. Alvarez proposes to legislate a "National Cancer Act" if elected. With the snowballing support for him, he may yet defy reality and pull a surprise.

* * *

One of the most significant endorsements Alvarez has secured is from Senator Arroyo, who has not been too generous with his support. Arroyo says "Alvarez deserves to return to the Senate" and "looks forward to working with him there." As far as I can tell, Arroyo has not endorsed anyone else in this election, but his tri-media plug for Alvarez is not surprising, for they were comrades in the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship. Arroyo was in the thick of the fight against the martial law regime here, serving as pro bono lawyer for human rights victims and political prisoners, including Ninoy Aquino. Alvarez was in the forefront of the efforts of the galant Filipino exiles in the United States, such as Raul Manglapus, Bonifacio Gillego, Raul Daza and others, to convince the US government to withdraw support from Marcos. Such bonding is hard to replace.

* * *

This story has been the talk among students of the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City. The son of vice-presidential candidate Loren Legarda and former Gov. Tony Leviste was just a few points shy of being third honor (a minimum grade of 85) in the Ateneo seventh grade class of 2004. As the class was preparing for graduation, Senator Legarda was said to have visited a ranking Ateneo official to ask if her son's 84 plus average could be pulled up to 85; she was said to have been given a diplomatic answer but as expected, the request was not granted. Former Governor Leviste then showed up to do his own persuasion, but it didn't work, too. After that, the Leviste son stopped attending the graduation rehearsals, this the classmates noticed. On graduation day, neither he nor his famous parents showed up.

* * *

The Retrouvaille program, a Catholic ministry devoted to assisting married couples in troubled and hurting marriages, has announced a healing weekend from Friday afternoon, May 14 to Sunday afternoon, May 16 at the Mother of Mercy Spiritual Center, SVD Road, Barangay San Jose (near San Pablo Seminary), Tagaytay City. Columban Fr. David Clay, the spiritual director of Retrouvaille, and three lay couples who have experienced the program itself will give talks during the three-day Tagaytay weekend, which will be followed by six Saturday afternoon sessions in Metro Manila. For more information on the Retrouvaille program, call Fr. Clay at 523-3361 or cell 0918-9020511; Tom and Ruby at 931-8413 and 932-3750, or cell 0918-923-2973, and Nes and Inday Sitaca, 938-9719.

Cesar's convictions

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

"VERY straining," was how longtime Davao legal luminary Cesar Europa described the weeks presidential candidate Raul Roco was in the United States for medical treatment. "It was very hard on all of us, both physically and emotionally," he said.

Europa's lament is understandable: he is Roco's coordinator for Southern Mindanao. Europa's kidney transplant last year has not prevented him from overseeing the campaign activities of the former education secretary and his slate. This is in fact his second time to coordinate Roco's presidential campaign in the region. The "working relationship" dates back more than two decades ago, when Roco served as the national president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and Europa represented Eastern Mindanao in the IBP Board of Governors.

In anticipation of Roco's return and resumption of his presidential bid, Europa, a non-politician, wrote his fellow volunteers last week, urging them to be steadfast in the midst of an avalanche of forecast that the presidential race has been trimmed down to a fight between President Macapagal-Arroyo and actor Fernando Poe. Jr.

Europa's letter goes: "Together, the Roco volunteers all over the country have, in fact, been able to accomplish an impossible task. On a shoestring budget, we have been able to mount a credible nationwide campaign. In most instances we have become accustomed to the phrase 'we will make do with what we have' and, on a grand scale, MAKE DO WE HAVE.

"People have asked why, they have also asked how? The answer can be said in a word: FAITH. We have been working not for fame, fortune, or even gratitude. We have been doing what we have been doing and achieving what we have achieved BECAUSE WE BELIEVE IN WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR. We believe that our country needs CHANGE, that our nation needs HOPE, that our people need HONEST AND EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP. We have shouted to the masses that Raul Roco is the man who can give us this change, this hope, this leadership.

"Our detractors are now saying: 'GIVE UP, IT IS HOPELESS.' They say that we should shift our allegiance to a 'winnable candidate.' But is this the nature of our FAITH? Is our conviction in what we believe in this shallow? I do not need a response for I know that I will receive a resounding NO!!

"Together, we began this endeavor because of what we believe in and that HAS NOT CHANGED. Our country still needs change, still needs hope, and still needs effective honest leadership and Raul Roco is STILL THE MAN FOR THE JOB.

"This is why I do not hesitate to ask what others say is unthinkable. Yes, the chips are down but I know and believe that we can still prevail because we are fighting for what is good, what is right, and what is true. Call me naive, but I still have FAITH. I am but a part in the machine as we are all but I humbly ask all of you now to take heart and to continue to fight the good fight. WE MAY BE DOWN BUT WE ARE DEFINITELY NOT OUT. Let us show our nation that truly, *MAY PAG-ASA PA*."

Europa's optimism is not diminished by the fact that Roco's group of volunteers is pitted against the well-oiled machinery of the other candidates. In Davao City, for instance, President Macapagal's votes are being marshaled by tough-talking Mayor Rodrigo Duterte and Rep. Prospero Nograles, erstwhile political arch-enemies, now running under the so-called Unity Ticket. Meanwhile, erstwhile Duterte ally, former Mayor Benjamin de Guzman, who is riding on the anti-corruption issue and the unsolved summary executions perpetrated by the Davao Death Squad (DDS), is carrying FPJ.

"We are undaunted despite the odds," Europa said. Hope springs eternal. The Filipinos will redeem themselves.

* * *

In the run-up to the May 10 elections, the municipality of Laac, Compostela Valley province has seen the deaths of three more members of Bayan Muna, raising to 40 the number of the the party-list group's casualties nationwide. Around 3 p.m. last April 24, Charlie Mandaya Davao, Ganadi Pinamaylan and Charlie Utag, all lumads, were eating in a *carinderia* some 25 meters away from the town's police station. Suddenly, without warning, three armed men in plain clothes shot them to death. Minutes later, army soldiers belonging to the 60th Infantry Battalion, led by a certain 2nd Lt. Salcedo, joined them and strafed the *carinderia*, causing injuries to some bystanders, witnesses claimed.

The AFP reported that the three victims were killed in an encounter between the army and the New People's Army. Three other companions of the victims, including Datu Davao Barangay Captain Alex Aydao, are still missing.

Curiously, last April 29, while the incident was being investigated, Laac police station commander Insp. George Torres and another companion were gunned down by elements of the army's 60th IB inside a store near the police station.

The twin-incident resulted in the pulling out of the 60th IB from the locality, following protests made by enraged local officials and residents.

In the '80s, Laac rose to national prominence when the local chapter of the IBP (during the succeeding terms of lawyers Dionisio dela Serna, who was appointed housing czar during the Ramos administration, and Europa) exposed countless human rights violations by the AFP in the area, particularly the forcible herding of residents into Vietnam-style hamlets. A fact-finding commission then headed by retired Supreme Court Justice JBL Reyes went to Laac and confirmed the IBP exposé. More than two decades later, Laac is once again gripped by fear.

* * *

Comments at karlos_z23@hotmail.com and kar_laws@yahoo.com

The man with two novels

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

NICK Joaquin to me was sin and stories. The first due to an early memory of my father arriving home with a copy of "Manila: Sin City" which he cautiously placed on a high shelf, beyond my reach; the second due to "Pop Stories for Groovy Kids" one set in green, the other in orange, brought back from Erehwon. Childhood was his stories for kids; my early teens, the guilty pleasure of retrieving his book of essays from the forbidden shelf, there to read about gambling and prostitution, the heat of August and the Ruby Towers quake. The forbidden "Sin City" turned out to be rather tame but tantalizing nonetheless: it opened up history. Not the history of textbooks, but history written in a hurry to meet magazine deadlines.

The pleasure of the forbidden would return when I read his novel "Caves and Shadows," the first "serious" novel I pestered my father to buy for me, my successful lobbying made more delicious by his failing to notice that the cover featured a crab on a woman's breast. The book remains my favorite novel by a Filipino, made all the more precious because it long remained out of print.

Bored to tears by textbooks and the clumsy prose of historians, his "A Question of Heroes" opened up an appreciation of our greats that might otherwise have been impossible. His "The Aquinos of Tarlac" brought forth, in turn, the discovery of political biography. His stories were now, for me, about sins: of the high and mighty, both generations gone and those in the here and now.

But it was when I found in a shop, and read with feverish delight, his "Reportage on Politics," that his influence on me became profound. I had strayed from the writings of Filipinos, entranced as I was by the journalism-as-history of Ryzard Kapuscinski, a Pole who wrote on the decay and destruction of despots: of courtiers in hiding pining for the rule of the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie; of his witnessing the collapse of the autocracy of the Shah of Iran. Abroad, watching from afar the senile last days of our home-grown dictatorship, foreigners seemed the only ones who could write about curtains coming down on dictatorships. Meaning was in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's "Autumn of the Patriarch," not in anything by a Filipino. James Fenton seemed more capable of writing about the flight of the conjugal dictatorship than any Filipino.

Then came Nick Joaquin's "Quartet of the Tiger Moon," and for once there was a rival to James Fenton's reportage on the fall of the House of Marcos.

But it was one slim collection, his "Reportage on Politics"—found one weekend in 1988, in a tattered condition—that finally gave me what every aspiring writer needs: a model to emulate. Here were the stories I wanted to read, about the period I found most interesting: the period of the fallen Third Republic, peopled by heroes and villains, most of whom were still alive, the rest departed not so long ago; an age so vivid to my elders but totally alien to my martial law baby eyes. Here was Mrs. Macapagal setting out to clean a Palace now gone (demolished by her husband's successor); here were political parties with rivalries stretching back generations; here were politicians castigating pollsters, denouncing survey results, movie idols making aborted runs for the presidency. Most delightful of all, the book contained the finest piece of Filipino political reportage I'd ever read: "13 o'clock": in which Speaker Pepito Laurel, drunk as a skunk, wrestles a microphone to the ground during a session of the House, and where, presiding over a sine die session in which the legislature literally commands time to stand still, a devious Ferdinand Marcos saves his Senate presidency by surreptitiously re-starting the clocks allowing him to gavel the session adjourned. This was *the* model; *the* way to write about politics and politicians; this was *the* keen eye for detail, *the* mordant wit, *the* way to get it done. The only other literary journalist to approach his level of influence on me would be Pete Lacaba's reportage on the First Quarter Storm—and was he not heir to the great Joaquin?

That same year, Tom Wolfe, my preeminent writing idol of the time, published a literary manifesto titled "Stalking the Billion Footed Beast." Profound was its influence, simple though its message was: Be curious! Look, observe, inquire, and by so doing, write real stories, whether in journalism or fiction. Ten years later, Nick Joaquin would make a speech with much the same message: seek out reality, embrace it, then mold it to your will; reality was the clay necessary to produce great works of the imagination. As he himself pointed out, before the Latin Americans had given birth to magical realism, the humid improbabilities of say, Isabel Allende and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, he had labored forth on what we like to call his Tropical Baroque. Long before Tom Wolfe published "The Electric Kool Aid Acid Test," there had been Joaquin with his reportage on politics, on people, events and crime (he felt great pride in the authorship of his crime pieces, bellowing an exhortation to me once, that they must be included in the Free Press centennial book, something I was unable to do). And he was right; what's more, unlike Americans like Wolfe, his journalism as fine writing has aged well. "Kool Aid" suffers from artifice; Joaquin's reportage continues to shine.

He would close his more important public remarks with, "I have spoken." A literal translation of the way the Tagalogs of old would close their more solemn remarks. Aguinaldo, of whom he had written a play of penetrating psychological insight rivaled only by Gabriel Garcia Marquez's fictional meditation on Bolivar ("The General in His Labyrynth"), used to close his remarks in the same way. This small detail, to me, personified the manner in which Joaquin's heritage was made the world's by his pen.

Ambiguous report

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

IT is understandable if the PR staff of candidates react quickly, by way of press release or letter to the editor, when news or comments that are adverse to their clients are published in the newspapers. That's what they get paid for, handsomely at that.

Through the years, I have developed a sixth sense of sorts in differentiating between letters written by image-makers and those made by readers who want to read the news the way it should be—accurate and fair.

There is something in the writing style and choice of words that tell me if a letter-complaint is motivated by sincere intentions or aimed at giving publicity to an aspiring public figure.

The letter I received last week from Concepcion Peralta of Malate, Manila, gave me an insight on what ideas probably play in the minds of some readers of the INQUIRER when it reports on political events.

Referring to the April 28 issue, the reader wrote: "Your front page picture of the look-alike contest of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo where you described Payatas, Quezon City, as a 'known Lacson bailiwick' clearly showed your bias for Sen. Ping Lacson.

"Then, in your story on Page A5, you mentioned that Blumentritt, Manila, is a bailiwick of Fernando Poe Jr. Just because FPJ shot several movies in Blumentritt does not mean that the place will already go for him. What kind of logic is that? How did you arrive at that conclusion?

"You also mentioned that Payatas is known to be supportive of Lacson because it was there where he had his *miting de avance*. So what if he held his *miting de avance*?

Conclusion

"Does that mean if a candidate holds his *miting de avance* in one place that is already his bailiwick or that he will be supported by the people living there? What kind of logic is that?

"You are supposed to report the news straight and without any opinion. If this is news, it was obvious you were editorializing. What ever happened to 'balanced news' that you claim to be your slogan?"

The news in question ("GMA look-alike tilt not meant to taunt foes, organizers say") was about the search being conducted by a pro-President Macapagal organization for women who bear a resemblance to her. The contests are held in areas in Metro Manila that are considered bailiwicks of opposition presidential candidates.

Payatas, Quezon City, and Blumentritt, Manila, were the sites of the recent contests. In the course of the report, it was mentioned that Payatas is a known bailiwick of Lacson because it was here where he had his *miting de avance*.

Blumentritt was described as Poe territory because the place was his favorite shooting site for more than 20 years. The names of the films that were shot there were enumerated in the news.

Noticeably, the report did not have a byline or tag line that would give a clue as to the identity of the reporter who wrote it.

I think the reader cannot be faulted for getting the impression that the newspaper was making a statement of fact when it reported the alleged political leanings of those places. The description was made without any qualifications and in a straightforward manner. That was how it struck me too when I first read it.

Bailiwicks

I agree with the reader's observation that simply because Lacson's *miting de avance* was held in Payatas and Blumentritt was the site of some of Poe's movies, it does not make those areas their political bailiwicks.

It is common knowledge that candidates hold their rallies wherever they think they need to get more exposure to drum up support for their causes. It does not follow that because a site is chosen for a rally, it can already be considered his bailiwick. If that were the case, all the places where a candidate puts up a platform and delivers his speech should be treated as his political stronghold.

With regard to being the site of location shootings as a measure of the political sentiments of the people living in that place, I am not sure if that assessment is logical or rational. I do not think several one- or two-week stays in Blumentritt to do movies over a 20-year period are sufficient to make its residents die-hard supporters of Poe. That may be a little insulting to the political maturity of those people.

Talking of political bailiwicks, I think the closest that the term can be used accurately would be in relation to the provinces or regions where the national candidates can trace their roots.

For Ms Macapagal, that would be Pampanga. For Raul Roco, the Bicol area. Lacson can look forward to overwhelming support from the voters in his native Cavite. For Poe, it's Pangasinan. Bro. Eddie Villanueva's political clout may be strong in Bulacan.

Omission

So what went wrong with the news report complained about by the reader?

It failed to state clearly that the "bailiwick" description came from Robert Bastillo, the national spokesperson of the organization that is conducting the Gloria look-alike contests. This was clear from the document on which the news was based.

For some unexplained reasons, the news did not make the proper attribution as to the source of the statements in dispute and, as a result, they came out as if they were written by the person who wrote it.

Had the true authorship of the questioned statements been mentioned clearly, I am sure the readers would have been put on notice at the outset that the description of the alleged political leanings of Payatas and Blumentritt came from somebody else, not the newspaper.

I do not think the omission was deliberate. In the haste to meet newspaper deadlines, errors of that nature often happen. In any event, the INQUIRER regrets the inadvertence.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

THEY SAID

Sex scandals

"So many straight politicians are dragged into sex scandals, yet their heterosexual excesses are not questioned."

—Michael Urbano of the Progressive Organization of Gays in the Philippines, expressing concern about a worsening of the Filipino bias against male homosexuals as a result of the rape charge against senatorial reelectionist John Osmeña

Distasteful TV shows

I WOULD like to register my formal complaint against the "Bubble Gang" episode aired on April 23, 2004 over GMA 7. I didn't watch the whole episode, but the only scene I saw made my blood boil. It showed a very old woman angry with the boy who saved her from would-be rapists. Her dialogue was, and I quote: "*Gusto kitang gantihan dahil itinaboy mo 'yung gustong rumeyp sa akin. Bakit, wala na ba akong karapatang lumigaya?*"

This was not funny. It was a brazen display of disrespect and insult to women, most especially senior women. "Bubble Gang" pictured elderly women as sexually starved; that women of this age welcome and invite rapists to satisfy their thirst for sex. I was appalled and totally disgusted that GMA 7 allowed this type of offense on women.

Many times I have come across rubbish and vulgarity in our local TV shows. In one episode of "Bubble Gang," they showed an old person repeatedly spitting in a tin can, then a visitor came and drank all his ____. This was really infuriating, sickening and revolting.

In "S-Files," Rosanna Roces practically molested a *balikbayan* guest, requesting him to open his shirt. Then, placing her hand over his breast, she started kissing him from the chest down, with her legs wrapped around him and acting so sexually turned on. This was disgusting, scandalous, X-rated. It was a clear act of sexual aggression and lasciviousness.

A TV commercial of a shampoo product showed a young lady with beautiful hair. Two girls were envious of her and they said "*nagparebond, baka nakapag-asawa ng mayaman.*"

I am at a loss for words to describe such an abomination. We don't need to prostitute ourselves just to be able to afford going to the parlor. You could have said "*Baka na*-promote *siya sa trabaho*" or "*Baka kaya umasenso ang negosyo niya*," instead of picturing women as totally incapable of succeeding in this world. This particular commercial teaches young women about bad values. It inculcates in the minds of young women that education, hard work and perseverance are no longer necessary and that the only way to success is to marry a rich guy.

I wonder if that's what the owners and officers of the product's manufacturing company teach their daughters and sisters.

Broadcast media, especially television, can greatly affect values formation. They have the capability to influence millions of people. But with that power comes responsibility. Shows can be funny and entertaining without resorting to rashness, impetuosity and insolence.

—ANNIE C. TAN-YEE,
acty@fordedsa.com

Parricide not a family matter

IN THE OPINION section of the INQUIRER's April 27 issue is a letter from Rafael C. Garcia, counsel for the Martel family. Garcia writes that the alleged frustrated parricide inflicted on the person of Melissa Mercado-Martel by her husband is a "family matter."

This statement is surprising coming from a lawyer. Parricide is a felony punishable by the Revised Penal Code. A felony is prosecuted in the name of the "People of the Philippines," and thus cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, merely be a "family matter."

—CARLOS ESTEBAN JR.,
carlesteb33@yahoo.com

Homeowners on Nasecore

THIS is a rejoinder to the letter of Pete Ilagan, president of the National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms. (PDI, 4/6/04) His efforts to bring the power issues deeper into the consciousness of various homeowners associations in Metro Manila have been very helpful. Through the sustained efforts of Nasecore, more and more presidents of homeowners associations in Metro Manila are getting involved in the advocacy of promoting and protecting consumer interests.

We, in the Federation of Las Piñas Homeowners Association Inc. (Folpha), composed of 130 homeowners associations, 20 barangays of Las Piñas City and consisting of about 26,000 families with a total membership estimated at 156,000 or roughly 30 percent of the total population of the city, have joined hands with Nasecore in this worthwhile undertaking.

Through your paper, we would like to take this opportunity to express our full and unwavering support to the efforts of Nasecore in educating the residential consumers on the opportunities for empowering themselves.

We share Nasecore's vision of empowering the consumers initially through the formation of consumer cooperatives that will be engaged in the retail supply of electricity if only to make competition under the Electric Power Industry Reforms Act work in favor of the consumers. In this regard, we call on the rest of the current presidents of homeowners associations within the Meralco franchise to join hands with us in this pro-consumer endeavor.

—DR. BONIFACIO C. DAZO,
president,
Federation of Las Piñas
Homeowners Association Inc.,
Las Piñas City

Participatory governance benefiting just a few

WE are ordinary Novo Vizcayanos who belong to the so-called "indigenous peoples." Our parents are lowly farmers from mountain villages, now on the verge of hopelessness due to the indifference of our provincial officials to our plight.

May we convey our reaction to the INQUIRER's March 30 editorial about the so-called participatory governance in Nueva Vizcaya.

The book, "Celebrating Participatory Governance in Nueva Vizcaya" from which your editorial was based, bares facts maliciously distorted by selfish enterprising politicians here who used the good and unsuspecting author to advance their vested interests and prolong their stay in power despite the mounting local clamor for a change of leadership.

We feel aghast at the way our province has been pictured by the book as if we are living in paradise. The information in that book must have not come from ordinary Novo Vizcayanos, who continue to wallow in the quagmire of poverty.

Novo Vizacayanos should not be blinded by numerous awards and praises. We don't need them more than we need more food on the table; more jobs for our thousands of jobless; more irrigation systems for our waterless farms; more medicines for our sick indigents; more roads—not just foot trails—for our mountain communities; and genuine peace so we can safely walk in the night and sleep soundly within the confines of our homes without fear of getting harassed, robbed, raped or killed.

Try visiting our province to personally feel the sentiments of its inhabitants, especially those living in the highlands and you will immediately throw the book where it belongs—the garbage pit.

But we say thank you to the INQUIRER for that editorial, which is now being utilized by traditional politicians here in their campaign and propaganda activities. That editorial has moved us to tell the world about the real situation.

The so-called participatory governance narrated in the book benefits just a limited circle of an incumbent politician's allies and benefactors.

—JOJO LONGKINO, coordinator, Genuine Association of Indigenous Youth Tribe, Dupax del Norte; RONALD FEDERICO, coordinator, Nueva Vizcaya Indigenous Youth for Development; RECTO NADIAHAN, coordinator, Benguet, Ifugao, Bontoc, Apayao and Kalinga Student Association, Kasibu Chapter, Barangay Didipio, Kasibu; VALENTIN SEGUNDO, Kalanguya Student Organization, Barangay Imugan, Santa Fe

Increase in SSS pension

THIS is in reference to the letter of BG Andres, which was published in the March 17 edition of the INQUIRER. Andres is seeking an increase in his monthly retirement pension.

The Social Security System is fully aware of the plight of its pensioners. But it is not in a position to consider any increase at this time. Recent actuarial studies reveal increasing the monthly pension without the necessary remedial measures to improve the viability of the fund would result to the financial collapse of the agency. SSS funds are already in danger of being depleted in 2015.

At present, benefit payments continue to outpace contribution collections. The SSS however, has narrowed the gap from P4.96 billion in 2002 to P760 million as of October last year.

The SSS is continuously exploring ways to improve its financial position to support benefit increases. It has intensified its collection efforts and rationalized its investment strategies to enhance its income. It is also exploring ways to optimize use of resources to generate savings.

The SSS recently launched Pensioner's Day, which is held twice a month in SSS offices nationwide. It reflects our concern for pensioners. During the Pensioner's Day, SSS doctors and dentists provide free medical and dental services and conduct health seminar for the pensioners.

Compared with the Government Service Insurance Service, the SSS contribution rate is far too low to support benefit enhancements. The GSIS monthly contribution rate is 21 percent while the SSS collects only 9.4 percent, which is one of the lowest rates in the world.

—JOEL P. PALACIOS,
assistant vice president,
Media Affairs Department,
Social Security System,
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

Ignorance leads to fear...

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Across the NATION

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

Assistant Editor **Tony Bergonia**

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c/o Cebu Daily News
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Abra campaign rivals clash; 1 killed

LAGANGILANG, Abra—A nephew of reelectionist Mayor Lizardo Sinogo Jr. was killed while two others were wounded after a shootout erupted between supporters of the mayor and his rival in Barangay Pawa here on Saturday night.

Police identified the fatality as Ranyfer Flores, Sinogo's nephew and brother of a candidate for councilor here. Tirso Agdaquit, Sinogo's supporter, and Pili Cabarles, a supporter of mayoral candidate John Suliba, were wounded and taken to the Abra Provincial Hospital in Bangued town, some 18 km from here.

Insp. Dionisio Fianza, Lagangilang police chief, said the shootout occurred at past 10 p.m. Saturday as Sinogo's group was campaigning in Pawa.

Fianza said Sinogo's supporters, who were aboard a truck, met Suliba's supporters and they started taunting each other.

He said the taunting and arguments led to a shootout involving the armed followers of both camps. The vehicles used by both groups bore bullet holes.

Police recovered at least 28 shells from different types of firearms in the crime scene.

"Supporters ang mainit (Their supporters were hot tempered)," Fianza said.

The police never anticipated the outbreak of violence here since there was no indication of an intense political rivalry between Suliba of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino and Sinogo of the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas.

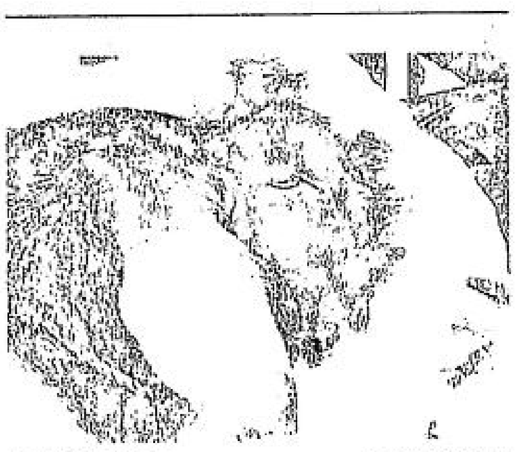
Fianza also said the police failed to find guns during recent searches in the houses of the mayoral candidates.

Sinogo, a former member of the United States Army and veteran of the Vietnam War, said he did not join his supporters in the campaign in Barangay Pawa.

He said the gunmen could have mistaken Flores for him. "(They) thought Flores was me. They have been planning to kill me," Sinogo told the INQUIRER.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Suliba, a former police superintendent (lieutenant colonel), for comment on Sunday afternoon.

Fianza said they would ask officials of the Abra police to send additional policemen to the town following the incident. He said Lagangilang has only 14 policemen. *Artha Kira Paredes, Northern Luzon Bureau*



A BOER GOAT LEONCIO BALBIN JR.

Ilocos Sur wants to be goat capital

VIGAN CITY—If Nueva Ecija is the "carabao center" of the country, Ilocos Sur is positioning itself as the "goat center" through the massive production and improvement of goat breed.

"We hope to become the goat center of the country in the next five years," Ilocos Sur Gov. Deogracias Victor Savellano told the INQUIRER during the first Dinguen (livestock) Festival here on Friday.

The festival, which highlighted Ilocos Sur's achievement in goat propagation, was organized to open more livelihood opportunities to residents and local entrepreneurs.

Savellano said goat production is a good business venture because there is a ready market for goat meat and milk.

"In the province alone, we could not even supply the demand," Savellano said.

The festival featured contests for the best buck (male goat) and doe (female goat).

Savellano said Ilocos Sur is now producing above average- sized goats because of the provincial government's cross breeding program aimed at improving size and milk production.

He said the province imported eight boer and ober hasli goats from the United States in January 2002 to sustain the cross breeding program involving native and imported goats. *Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Bible in Itawes

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Copies of the second Bible translated in native dialect have been released here. The bible in Itawes, titled "Ya Bahu Nga Testamiento," was translated by Fr. Henry Singayana, an Itawes native. The first Bible in Ibanag was issued 10 years ago with the help of the Summer Institute of Linguistics and Ibanag writers.

Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Animals pol victims too

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Even animals owned by politicians are not spared from political violence. A cow, a horse and a carabao of village official Leo Dayag of Barangay San Jose in Enrile town, Cagayan province, were shot dead by armed men for no apparent reason. Police found no traces of the bullets used in the shooting. Enrile and another town, Buguey, are being monitored for possible inclusion in the list of areas under the control of the Commission on Elections, police said.

Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

78 villages get phones

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—At least 78 villages in the province will benefit from the $2.9-million "Telepono sa Barangay" (TSB) project launched at the provincial capitol compound here on Wednesday. The Canadian government-funded project will link by telephone residents in Nueva Vizcaya's remote villages to other parts of the country and abroad using telecommunications equipment from Canada. Under the project, two telephone booths will be installed in the recipient villages and town halls of Sta. Fe, Aritao, Dupax del Sur, Dupax del Norte, Bambang, Bayombong, Solano, Quezon, Villaverde, Bagabag and Diadi.

Ben Moses Ebreo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

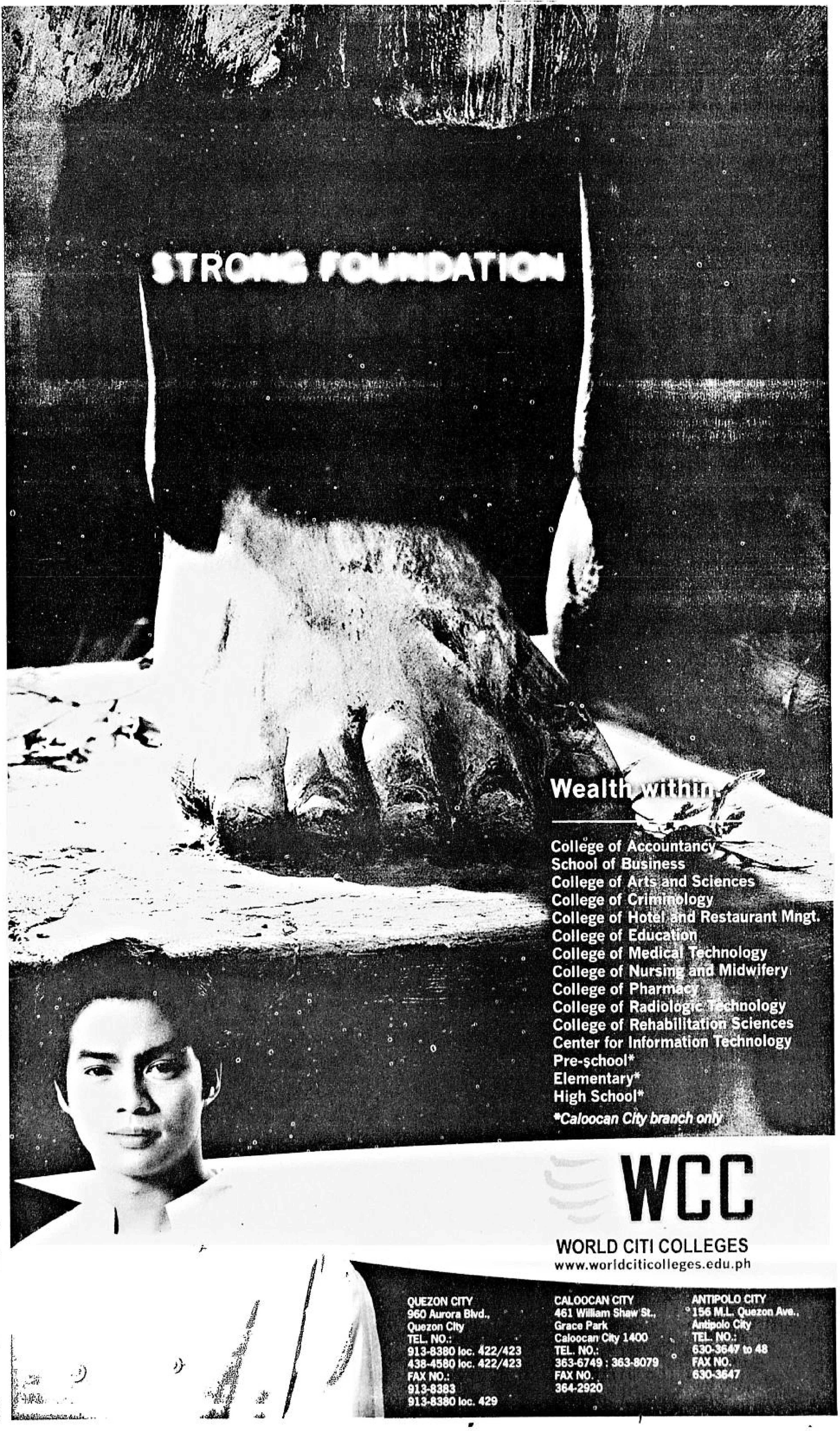
Fire destroys office

TARLAC CITY—A fire believed caused by faulty electrical wiring destroyed the provincial guesthouse here on Sunday night, police said. No one was reported hurt in the fire that lasted for two hours. The building was used as an extension office of the governor's special projects office-technical working group (SPO-TWG). It was built in the late 1980s during the term of former Gov. Mariano Un Ocampo III. The SPO-TWG is in charge of the computerization program of the provincial government and monitors the implementation of all of the social services of Tarlac.

PDI Central Luzon Desk

Child, mom hacked to death

GASAN, Marinduque—A two-year-old boy and his mother were hacked to death by the victim's nephew on Saturday. Investigation disclosed that suspect Oliver Rodriguez, 26, of Barangay Uno, forcibly entered the house of Rowena Rodriguez and her son Joshua, and without any provocation hacked the two to death. Both mother and son suffered fatal hack wounds on their necks and stab wounds at their backs. The suspect fled after the incident. The next day, police found the suspect hanging lifeless in a "duhat" tree, in what seemed like a suicide, in the mountainous area of Barangay Dili. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



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Grenade lobbed at NBI exec's house in Central Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—A still unidentified suspect lobbed a grenade at the house of National Bureau of Investigation director for Central Mindanao Silvino Cinches around 12:30 a.m. yesterday.

Cinches was in Manila when the attack occurred but his wife, Leovigilda, officer-in-charge of the Department of Education in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, and their son, were sleeping inside the house.

The grenade, which the police said was of the military type, exploded outside of the gate but no one was harmed.

The explosion damaged the NBI executive's government-issued vehicle, though.

Insp. Roger Legaspi, city police sub-station 2 chief, said the police were still trying to figure out the motive for the attack.

He said they could not determine yet whether the attack was intended for the NBI director or Ms Cinches.

While Ms Cinches has been linked to the issue of the nonremittance of the ARMM teachers' contribution with the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), her husband had not been involved in any scandal, police said. *Rosa-May de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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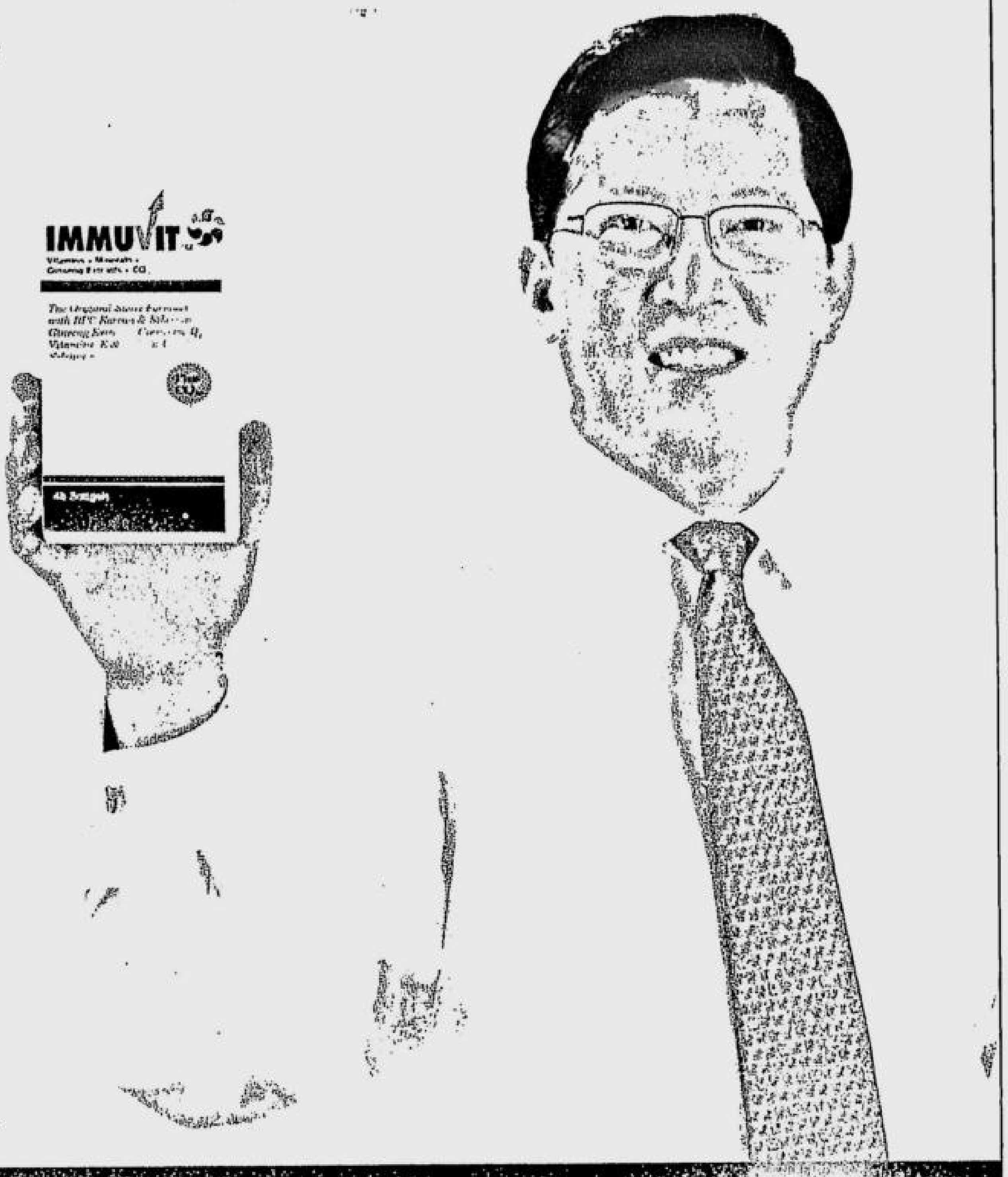
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ANOTHER SUMMER FEST LEONCIO BALBIN JR./PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
Grade school boys try to put their dancing act together during the Third Binatbatan street dancing as part of the 11th Viva Vigan Festival of the Arts. The dances depict the process of producing yarn from cotton.

Bets urged not to use tribe leaders for bids

BONTOC, Mt. Province—More than 30 elders representing various tribes in the Cordillera have urged candidates to stop using *bodong* (peace pact) holders to endorse their political bids.

Jordan Rivas, convenor of the Binodngan Peoples Organization (BPO), said politicians who use peace pact holders and the *bodong* system for political gain should be condemned by the tribes, especially those in the *Binodngan* areas (where the pact is applied).

The resolution was affirmed by more than 3,000 delegates to the celebration of the 20th Cordillera Day in Barangay Tocucan here.

The event was a tribute to the martyrdom of Kalinga chieftain Macli-ing Dulag, who opposed the construction of the Chico Dam in the 1980s, and other Cordillera heroes.

The peace pact holders said the resolution also promoted unity and peace among the tribes, which the *bodong* has brought together during the anti-Chico Dam protests in the 1970s and 1980s.

"In *bodong*-practicing areas, seeking endorsements or asking for support from a peace pact holder for a campaign is outright disrespect. It destroys community harmony," Rivas said.

He said politicians intruding in the decisions of peace pact holders could create factionalism, and worse, could even result in tribal conflicts.

The *bodong* is an indigenous sociopolitical system that governs the administration of justice and maintenance of peace and order among tribes.

Holders are consulted when tribal wars occur. The elders said the pact was being implemented in Lacub, Malibcong, Sallapadan, Bucloc, Daguioman, Boliney, Tubo, Luba and Manabo in Abra, and in all towns of Kalinga, except the capital of Tabuk.

Tony Bagyan, a BPO member, said that in Abra, where some politicians maintain armed groups, peace pact holders were usually threatened or harassed residents to support a candidate.

Anselmo Gaen, a peace pact holder of the Gubang tribe in Malibcong, said the Abra Bodong Elders Conference also issued a resolution to stop candidates from tapping the support of *bodong* holders.

Gaen said they had to endorse the resolution to avoid tribal conflict. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

More independents running in Marinduque

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

BOAC, Marinduque—From a total of 213 local candidates competing in the May 10 elections in this island province, at least 98 have opted to remain independent.

Of the four gubernatorial candidates, only incumbent Gov. Carmencita Reyes (Lakas-CMD) has a running mate—Vice Gov. Leandro Palma.

Only two of the gubernatorial candidates, former governor Bong Carrion (Nationalist People's Coalition) and Boac Mayor Roberto Madla (Partido ng Masang Pilipino), have their own political parties.

The other gubernatorial aspirant, former governor Rosa Lecaroz, joined the May elections also as an independent candidate.

The three remaining vice gubernatorial aspirants, Senior Board Member Adeline Angeles, Salvador Jamilla and Pedrito Nepomuceno, have all registered without party nomination.

The lone representative in Congress, Edmund Reyes, son of the incumbent governor, will seek his second term unopposed.

When asked what caused the "independent" phenomenon in this year's elections, Carrion said in his case, that was the decision of his followers.

But Angeles, who started her political career as an independent candidate for councilor in Mogpog town, she said, "I just want to prove something to the people that electoral politics is not only for the rich. That even when one is poor but has a sincere desire to serve and is capable of being an effective public servant, fighting it out during election without any political party should not serve as a hindrance."

After winning as Mogpog councilor, where she landed number two, she run as provincial board member in the 1998 elections and won, topping the contest. In the 2001 elections, she repeated the feat.

For the island's 111,752 voters who are used to being fed and wined by candidates in their political caucuses, running alone without the support of the party logistics could be draining to the pocket.

But Angeles was determined to swim across the tide. "It's my ultimate dream of changing my people's election values, which I call 'politics of candies'."

During elections, it's a regular sight for the children in the six municipalities here to open the palm of their hands whenever they see candidates. They ask for candies and loose coins. "Those candies started it all.

When they all grew up, they eventually ended as adults asking for envelops loaded with cash from the candidates," Angeles lamented.

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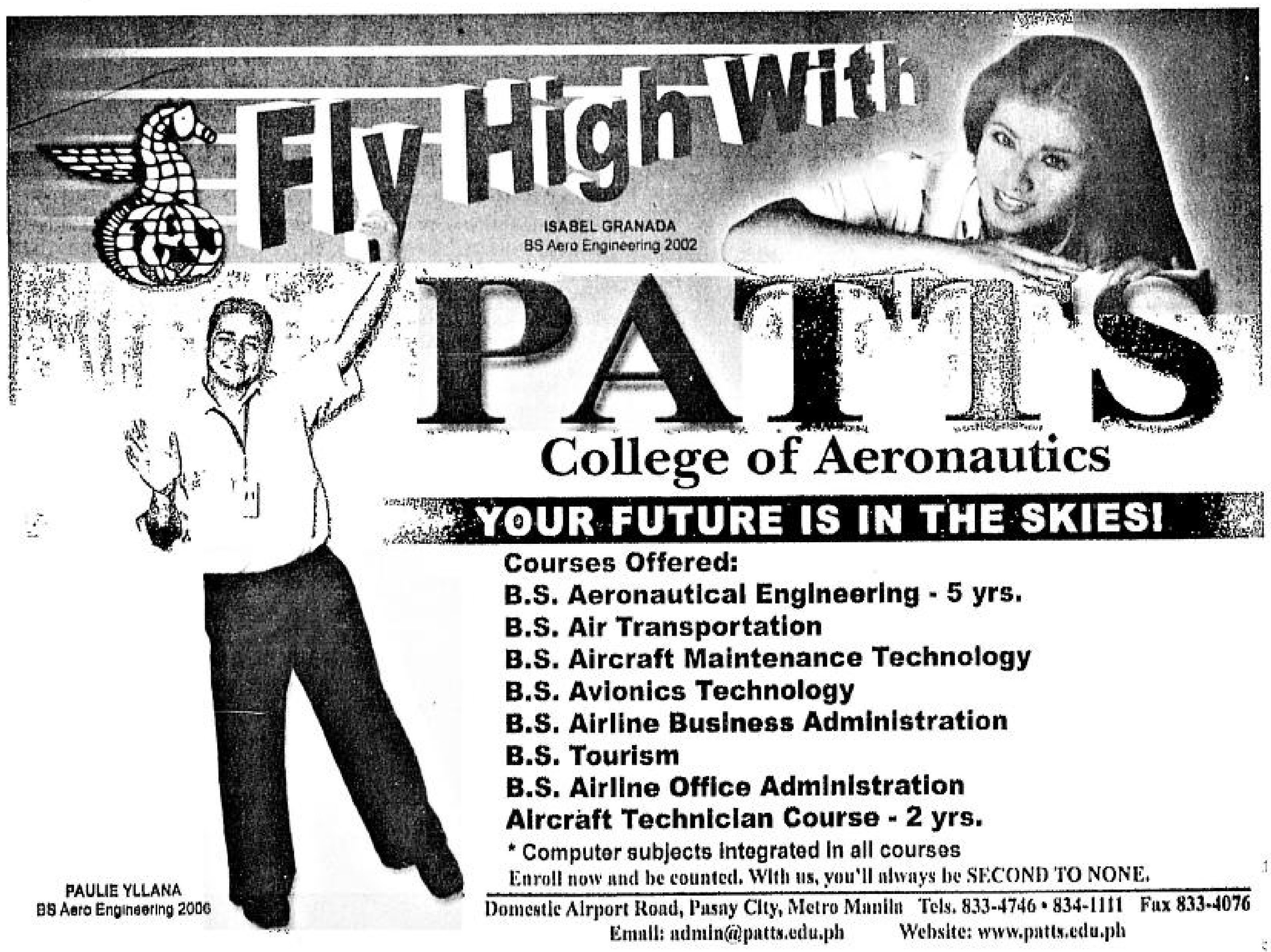

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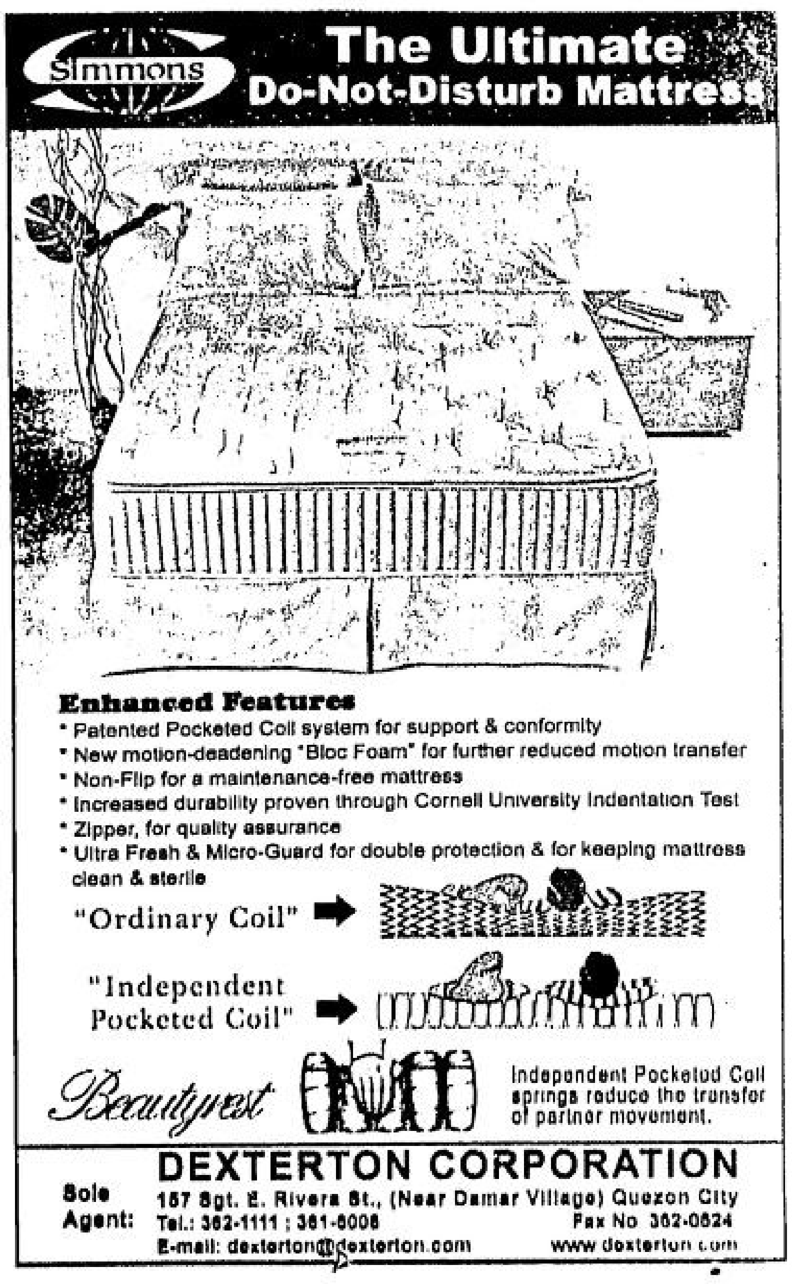
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Drivers of BMWs top sex survey

From page A1

torists aged 20 to 50, the German magazine "Men's Car" found that male BMW drivers claim they have sex on average 2.2 times each week while Porsche drivers have sex 1.4 times per week.

Male drivers of Audi say they have sex on average 2.1 times a week, while those of Volkswagen do it 1.9 times a week; Ford, 1.7 times; and Mercedes, 1.6 times.

According to the same survey published in the magazine's inaugural May issue, owners of foreign cars also lead less active sex lives compared with their BMW counterparts. Those who drive Italian cars have sex on average 2.0 times a week, followed by those of French cars (1.9), Japanese cars (1.8), Swedish cars (1.6) and Korean cars (1.5).

Among women, French car drivers are tops. They claim to have sex on average 2.1 times per week followed by drivers of Audi (2.0), Italian cars (2.0), and BMW (1.9). Porsche drivers were again at the bottom of the scale at 1.2 times per week.

Reuters

Int'l election watchers arrive

By Jerome Aning

MEMBERS of the first batch of an international poll monitoring team that would observe the conduct of the May 10 elections arrived over the weekend, the Department of Foreign Affairs announced.

The DFA said eight to 10 international poll experts comprised the team, whose members came from the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute and the International Federation of Election Systems.

The team was invited after the Consortium for Elections and Political Processes Strengthening (CEPPS) made a Philippine election assessment in March 2004.

The team was composed of seven election experts from five countries, namely, Denmark, Brazil, the US, Lebanon and the Philippines.

US Embassy Charge d'Affairs Joseph Mussomeli said the US would also field about 120 observers, mostly embassy staff.

He said Washington was interested in the elections because the Philippines is one of the important allies and friends of the US.

Mussomeli, however, clarified that the team would not come out with a "definitive statement" about how the elections were conducted but may make recommendations on ways to conduct future elections.

"(W)e are not in any way going to get close to the sort of definitive statement (on whether) this was a good election or a bad election. That's for Namfrel and the Commission on Elections and the Filipino people to decide," he said.

But reports of widespread fraud and cheating, he said, "would be a grave, serious concern to us." *With reports from Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Artha Kira Paredes, Donna Demetillo and Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Gringo-Lakas alliance up

From page A1

bers and is one of nine major factions of the so-called Guardian brotherhood, composed of active and non-active soldiers and policemen, as well as civilians.

Honasan made no reference to any plan to bolt Poe's camp when the INQUIRER spoke to him by phone.

For the last few weeks, there has been persistent speculation that he would leave the Poe camp.

Honasan told the INQUIRER he was joining forces with the administration as part of a national effort to curb cheating in the May 10 national and local elections.

For clean polls

"I am reaching out to Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. to ensure clean, peaceful and honest elections as a first step toward national unity and reconciliation," he said.

"What we've seen is that when opposition groups unite against poll fraud, the main suspect, which is the administration, is not included and so we're asking them to join us in this effort."

Honasan warned: "Unless we have clean elections on May 10, I'm afraid this nation will become ungovernable."

According to Honasan, he will be speaking at today's press conference at Club Filipino in Greenhills, San Juan, as head of the PGBI.

The PGBI was recently accredited as a party-list organization by the Commission on Elections.

Honasan, who led at least three failed coup attempts against the Aquino administration, has been tagged as the brains of the July 27, 2003 mutiny of junior military officers at the Oakwood Apartments in Makati.

Moral ground

"He (Honasan) will go through the judicial process," De Venecia said.

He said that Lakas-CMD and President Macapagal, "taking the high political and moral ground, have agreed to form a government of national unity."

"We detect the beginnings of victory," De Venecia said. "We take this humble stance to share power with the defeated."

He said such a unity government—on the assumption Ms Macapagal would win the election—would seek to embrace all parties and groups, including the opposition.

De Venecia said a government of national unity "will enable the new administration to enlist into the public service the brightest and best in our political parties, in our party-list organizations and in civil society."

It will also "entail the building of new political coalitions and the sharing of executive power—just as power is already shared by majority and minority parties in the legislature," he said.

De Venecia said such a government "can also begin the process of shifting to a parliamentary federal government that our most thoughtful leaders now regard as most suited to our stage of political development."

No Poe in unity gov't

The President had broken away from her rivals in recent surveys, enjoying the backing of a formidable political machinery, and was reported to have secured the endorsement of the Iglesia ni Cristo religious bloc.

Asked who among the opposition personalities would have a role in a government of national unity, De Venecia said: "Senator Angara will be a key factor."

Sen. Edgardo Angara is chair of both the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino and the national executive committee of the Poe-led KNP.

Asked what would happen to Poe in the post-election period, De Venecia said: "I doubt whether FPJ (Poe) will agree to join the government."

"He (Poe) is most welcome. He is one of the finer elements of Philippine society. He's 'Da King,' the leader of the movie industry," De Venecia said. "He (Poe) has a good reputation and continues to have a good reputation."

On the fate of breakaway opposition presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson, the Speaker said: "Lacson continues to be a senator."

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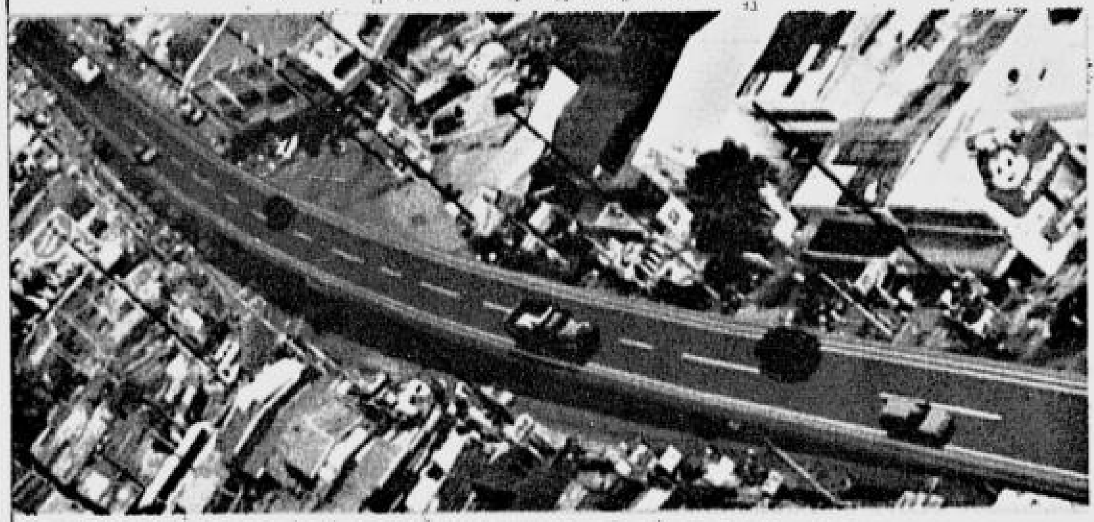

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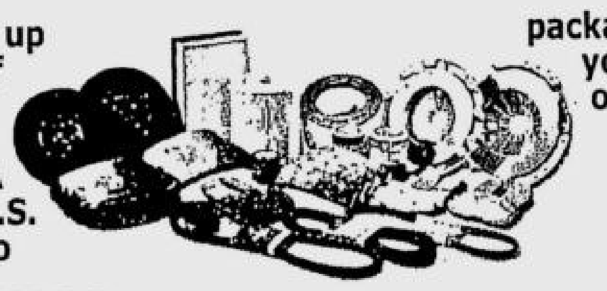

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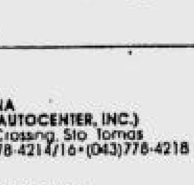

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2 Abu suspects linked to Comelec bomb plot

From page A1

they were arrested by the police, officials said.

Three other alleged plotters escaped during a follow-up raid in Maharlika Village, a Muslim enclave in Taguig, Metro Manila, the military police said.

The plot was uncovered just 10 days before the country holds its presidential elections.

"We have foiled another terrorist plan," National Capital Region Police Director Ricardo de Leon told the INQUIRER.

The two suspected bombers were on board a white Tamarax FX, parked in a dimly lit area on Cabildo Street in front of Plaza Roma, when they were arrested by a Western Police District mobile team at about 7:30 p.m.

The Comelec headquarters and the Manila Cathedral are located in the area.

"It was ready for trigger," said Supt. Edgar Danao of the WPD intelligence and investigation division, referring to an improvised 60-mm mortar bomb and a cellular phone seized from the suspects.

The phone was connected by electric wires to the explosive and a call would have detonated the device, he said.

Police could not immediately say how much damage the device might have caused.

The arrest of the pair brought to at least eight the number of suspected Abu Sayyaf terrorists detained by security forces in Metro Manila in less than two months.

Six others were arrested in March for alleged involvement in plots to bomb foreign embassies, commuter trains and department stores.

Police identified the two arrested suspects as Quirino Bandon, 33, and Arjie Sama, 35. They said both were residents of Maharlika Village and natives of Cotabato City.

Bandon and Sama were allegedly part of an Abu Sayyaf cell planning to stage terrorist attacks in Metro Manila to coincide with next Monday's elections, the military said.

During interrogation, Bandon and Sama revealed the whereabouts of their alleged companions, prompting authorities to raid the Maharlika Village.

Officials identified the three suspects who escaped as Ben Saudi Luminda, Mashur Jundam and Manor Otap.

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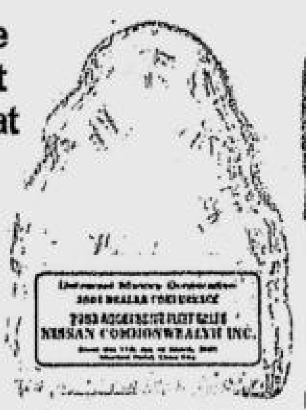

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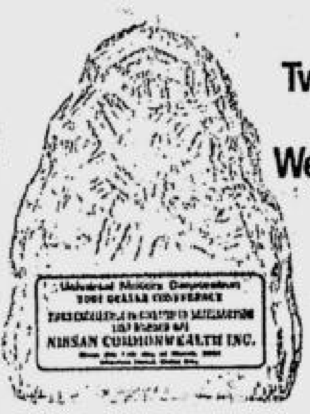
NISSAN COMMONWEALTH BRINGS HOME TOP DEALER HONORS

The triumphant Nissan Commonwealth team accepts the Dealer of the Year trophy at the recent National Sales Conference of UNIVERSAL MOTORS CORPORATION.

Left to right: Elizabeth H. Lee, Senior Vice President - Marketing (UMC); Rodrigo T. Janeo, Senior Vice President - Finance & Treasury (UMC); Leo Anthony P. San Juan, Chief Operating Officer (Nissan Commonwealth Inc.); Clemente V. Domondon, Executive Vice President (NCI); Dante L. Reyes, VP, Sales & Marketing (NCI)



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Hard work, glitz, image reloaded, GMA now on winning streak

From page A1

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Among other things, Ms Macapagal freely commented on her No. 1 (according to surveys) in her senatorial ticket Manuel Roxas II and his rumored girl friend, broadcast journalist Korina Sanchez, and a purported budding romance between Aquino and Mark Lapid, son of Lito Lapid, also on the K-4's Senate slate.

'Together Again'

On April 25, the President was the special guest at a concert hosted by superstar Nora Aunor, her chief "*artista*" endorser since she made it to the vice presidency in 1998, attributed in part to a huge public relations effort to cash in on her resemblance to the actress-singer. Sharing a microphone, the two sang a popular local tune of the '70s, "Together Again," to the delight of the fiercely loyal "Noranians" in the audience.

"*Pinagpraktisan niya talaga 'yan* (She really worked hard on that song)," says Kashiwahara, who is continually amazed at Ms Macapagal's persistence and capacity go get things done, no matter what it takes. "After this is all over, things will never be the same again for her. Her pace (of life) will never be the same," she adds.

Much more recently, a nationwide search for the President's look-alike was launched by the National People's Caravan or "Biyaheng Gloria," in an attempt to court the significant C, D and E votes, reportedly made up of Poe's most ardent supporters, drawing a number of gays (and only one woman at last count) in the first batch of contestants.

But her fondness for the entertainment industry is not just for show, her supporters say.

Managing to steal the thunder from Poe, an iconic figure in the movie industry, Ms Macapagal had vowed to create more jobs for the sector by stamping out film piracy and lowering amusement taxes, something she claimed was never even accomplished by her predecessor Joseph Estrada, who was once a movie actor, too.

Secret formula

A new and improved Gloria had also emerged from the wings, although longtime friends and people she had worked with insist this is the "real Gloria." The woman who once told INQUIRER columnist Belinda Cunanan-Olivares that she "had let God be my campaign manager," was now more generous with her smiles, quick to extend a warm handshake, unmindful of the punishing sun and a gathering dust storm that would have turned off members of the perfumed and well-coiffed set. This is no vain woman, as far as caring about her looks is concerned.

"I do not visit towns solely because there are many potential voters in the area," she tells the INQUIRER, "but because I want to go and see for myself what the conditions there are, what the people need. I've gone to towns with only 500 or fewer votes."

Ms Macapagal had even resorted to making light references to her height in her spiels, saying that this "disadvantage" had become an "advantage" since she is able to empathize with the plight of the "little folk." And indulging in small talk with reporters at a post-birthday celebration in Malacañang last week, the 57-year-old grandmother found herself revealing the secrets to her eternal youth: exercise, the right diet, and enough sleep.

Laughing at herself

Told that she seemed to have outlasted her rivals in terms of stamina (Poe, Lacson and Villanueva had complained of coughs, colds and chest pains, in that order; Roco had just returned from the United States after being treated for prostate cancer that had recurred), with only a hoarse voice to show after all that campaigning, Ms Macapagal admitted she took doses of a Chinese herbal syrup to soothe her throat. She even managed to take a poke at herself by saying, with a laugh, that her speaking voice was "not nice, anyway, since it is grating."

Improving on an image that had made her appear aloof and distant, especially to the poor, a crash course on public relations and an effective makeover campaign may have worked its magic on some, and hopefully, the "undecided" segment—10.9 percent of the voters, according to the April 10-17 SWS survey, and 10 percent for Pulse Asia—that make up a significant number to constitute a swing vote.

Winning smile

Apart from the winning smile, owing to new-found confidence spawned by the glowing survey results, the new look meant safari-style, wrinkle-free clothes, colorful and convenient pantsuits and blouses that are not tucked in, worn on the advice of wardrobe consultant Joanne Zapanta-Andrada in lieu of the drab outfits she wore to the sorties that made her look more like a Brownie on a campfire outing than a President.

The aquamarine number she had worn to the Bacoor sortie on Thursday, for instance, was an attention-getter, eliciting admiring glances from several in the crowd who had commented: "*Si Presidente, ang ganda ng suot* (The President wears beautiful clothes)!"

A stickler for time, (her Pulong Bayan and rallies—crisp, short and no frills—begin and end on time) Ms Macapagal has "modified" her clock-watching by wearing a necklace-watch, a fashion accessory that she can look at without appearing impolite to her audience, says a member of her staff.

Goal: Majority presidency

But will performance plus personality spell the difference at the polls?

Remonde foresees the winning streak to hold until Election Day. "We expect to win a convincing mandate, and the current trends clearly point in that direction," he says.

Optimistic as they already are, the President's campaign handlers are not yet complacent about their "imminent" victory.

Defensor admits they are confident, as they were in the past, that the President would win. "Now, what we have to accomplish is a majority presidency. Not only the campaigners, but also the people should see to it that the President gets the majority vote so there would be no questions as to her mandate.

"We hope we can stretch the remaining days prior to the elections to score a majority vote, a majority victory," he adds. "And when I speak of victory, I am not only talking of victory. We are sincerely hoping to attain a majority presidency."

International observers

Soliman says the President has a slim but clear lead. But what is important, she adds, is the need to focus our energies in making sure the May 10 elections will not be marred by cheating.

Plagued with mounting criticism that the Comelec would not be able to do its job or would be biased in favor of the administration, Soliman remains hopeful that the people's voices will be heard, "and people will assert themselves if they feel they are not being heard.

"International observers would be coming over, and we want to show that this administration is committed to clean and honest elections," she says. "In fact, our survival for the next phase is dependent on this. The people must be involved in protecting their ballots. The more people who will be mobilized to the precincts as the counting is being conducted and who will be reporting the events nationwide, the more we will be assured of clean and honest elections."

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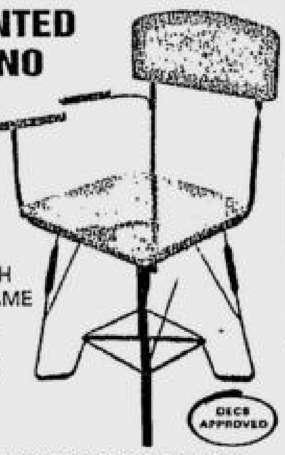

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Hard work, glitz, image reloaded, GMA now on winning streak

From page A1

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"*Artistas* and other entertainers make the campaign livelier," admitted Defensor in an earlier interview, and of course they help bring in the crowd, he added, referring to the huge throngs that showed up at Richard Gordon's proclamation rally in Olongapo last Feb. 20 featuring sexy comedienne Giselle Sanchez and young pop princess Sarah Geronimo as added attractions.

Last month, at rallies for the K-4 mayoral candidates Lito Atienza (Manila) and Feliciano Belmonte (Quezon City) that ushered in the start of the campaign for local candidates, the President shared stellar billing with television hosts Boy Abunda and Kris Aquino, and was not beyond sharing show business "*chismis*" (gossip) with the two, prompting INQUIRER's Malacañang reporter Juliet Labog-Javellana to comment that it looked like she had strayed into the Poe camp by mistake.

Among other things, Ms Macapagal freely commented on her No. 1 (according to surveys) in her senatorial ticket Manuel Roxas II and his rumored girl friend, broadcast journalist Korina Sanchez, and a purported budding romance between Aquino and Mark Lapid, son of Lito Lapid, also on the K-4's Senate slate.

'Together Again'

On April 25, the President was the special guest at a concert hosted by superstar Nora Aunor, her chief "*artista*" endorser since she made it to the vice presidency in 1998, attributed in part to a huge public relations effort to cash in on her resemblance to the actress-singer. Sharing a microphone, the two sang a popular local tune of the '70s, "Together Again," to the delight of the fiercely loyal "Noranians" in the audience.

"*Pinagpraktisan niya talaga 'yan* (She really worked hard on that song)," says Kashiwahara, who is continually amazed at Ms Macapagal's persistence and capacity go get things done, no matter what it takes. "After this is all over, things will never be the same again for her. Her pace (of, life) will never be the same," she adds.

Much more recently, a nationwide search for the President's look-alike was launched by the National People's Caravan or "Biyaheng Gloria," in an attempt to court the significant C, D and E votes, reportedly made up of Poe's most ardent supporters, drawing a number of gays (and only one woman at last count) in the first batch of contestants.

But her fondness for the entertainment industry is not just for show, her supporters say.

Managing to steal the thunder from Poe, an iconic figure in the movie industry, Ms Macapagal had vowed to create more jobs for the sector by stamping out film piracy and lowering amusement taxes, something she claimed was never even accomplished by her predecessor Joseph Estrada, who was once a movie actor, too.

Secret formula

A new and improved Gloria had also emerged from the wings, although longtime friends and people she had worked with insist this is the "real Gloria." The woman who once told INQUIRER columnist Belinda Cunanan-Olivares that she "had let God be my campaign manager," was now more generous with her smiles, quick to extend a warm handshake, unmindful of the punishing sun and a gathering dust storm that would have turned off members of the perfumed and well-coiffed set. This is no vain woman, as far as caring about her looks is concerned.

"I do not visit towns solely because there are many potential voters in the area," she tells the INQUIRER, "but because I want to go and see for myself what the conditions there are, what the people need. I've gone to towns with only 500 or fewer votes."

Ms Macapagal had even resorted to making light references to her height in her spiels, saying that this "disadvantage" had become an "advantage" since she is able to empathize with the plight of the "little folk." And indulging in small talk with reporters at a post-birthday celebration in Malacañang last week, the 5[illegible] year-old grandmother found herself revealing the secrets to her eternal youth: exercise, the right diet, and enough sleep.

Laughing at herself

Told that she seemed to have outlasted her rivals in terms of stamina (Poe, Lacson and Villanueva had complained of coughs, colds and chest pains, in that order; Roco had just returned from the United States after being treated for prostate cancer that had recurred), with only a hoarse voice to show after all that campaigning, Ms Macapagal admitted she took doses of a Chinese herbal syrup to soothe her throat. She even managed to take a poke at herself by saying, with a laugh, that her speaking voice was "not nice, anyway, since it is grating."

Improving on an image that had made her appear aloof and distant, especially to the poor, a crash course on public relations and an effective makeover campaign may have worked its magic on some, and hopefully, the "undecided" segment—10.9 percent of the voters, according to the April 10-17 SWS survey, and 10 percent for Pulse Asia—that make up a significant number to constitute a swing vote.

Winning smile

Apart from the winning smile, owing to new-found confidence spawned by the glowing survey results, the new look meant safari-style, wrinkle-free clothes, colorful and convenient pantsuits and blouses that are not tucked in, worn on the advice of wardrobe consultant Joanne Zapanta-Andrada in lieu of the drab outfits she wore to the sorties that made her look more like a Brownie on a campfire outing than a President.

The aquamarine number she had worn to the Bacoor sortie on Thursday, for instance, was an attention-getter, eliciting admiring glances from several in the crowd who had commented: "*Si Presidente, ang ganda ng suot* (The President wears beautiful clothes)!"

A stickler for time, (her Pulong Bayan and rallies—crisp, short and no frills—begin and end on time) Ms Macapagal has "modified" her clock-watching by wearing a necklace-watch, a fashion accessory that she can look at without appearing impolite to her audience, says a member of her staff.

Goal: Majority presidency

But will performance plus personality spell the difference at the polls?

Remonde foresees the winning streak to hold until Election Day. "We expect to win a convincing mandate, and the current trends clearly point in that direction," he says.

Optimistic as they already are, the President's campaign handlers are not yet complacent about their "imminent" victory.

Defensor admits they are confident, as they were in the past, that the President would win. "Now, what we have to accomplish is a majority presidency. Not only the campaigners, but also the people should see to it that the President gets the majority vote so there would be no questions as to her mandate.

"We hope we can stretch the remaining days prior to the elections to score a majority vote, a majority victory," he adds. "And when I speak of victory, I am not only talking of victory. We are sincerely hoping to attain a majority presidency."

International observers

Soliman says the President has a slim but clear lead. But what is important, she adds, is the need to focus our energies in making sure the May 10 elections will not be marred by cheating.

Plagued with mounting criticism that the Comelec would not be able to do its job or would be biased in favor of the administration, Soliman remains hopeful that the people's voices will be heard, "and people will assert themselves if they feel they are not being heard.

"International observers would be coming over, and we want to show that this administration is committed to clean and honest elections," she says. "In fact, our survival for the next phase is dependent on this. The people must be involved in protecting their ballots. The more people who will be mobilized to the precincts as the counting is being conducted and who will be reporting the events nationwide, the more we will be assured of clean and honest elections."

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He is now fighting to give every Filipino youth college education—through the Guaranteed Fund for Education For All Act.

For Jaworski, public service is about acting on behalf of the youth, the lowly, the forgotten, the downtrodden.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, May 3, 2004
Philip & James

1st Reading: 1 Cor 15:1-8
Gospel: Jn 14:6-14

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me. If you know me, you will know the Father also; indeed you know him and you have seen him."

Philip asked him, "Lord, show us the Father and that is enough." Jesus said to him, "What! I have been with you so long and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever sees me sees the Father; how can you say: 'Show us the Father?' Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?

"All that I say to you, I do not say of myself. The Father who dwells in me is doing his own work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; at least believe it on the evidence of these works that I do.

"Truly, I say to you, the one who believes in me will do the same works that I do; and he will even do greater than these, for I am going to the Father. Everything you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. And everything you ask in calling upon my Name, I will do."

Commentary

Philip was the first person to whom Jesus said, "Follow me!" (Jn 1:45). James was "brother of the Lord," understood to mean cousin.

From today's reading, four words to dwell on—spoken by Jesus to Philip—four words that are almost like icons, to come back to again and again.

- *"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."*
- *"I am in the Father and the Father is in me."*
- *"The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own."*
- *"The Father who dwells in me does his works."*

Don't forget that these words are not only about Jesus; they are about us too.

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Politics and family mix in Manila

(Last of two parts)

By Tarra Quismundo

KIM ATIENZA believes the name is just a bonus.

"Being an Atienza is incidental. I am my own man, under the guidance of my father," he said.

A UP film graduate, Atienza considers politics his calling as he related that he first served as a barangay official before starting his stint as a councilor nine years ago.

The young Atienza, up against Angping party-mate Joey Hizon, expressed "faith in people who believe in performance."

Hizon, the incumbent, was named one of three top non-performing legislators who failed to submit any measure during his second term in Congress.

Atienza, Roces and the entire LP congressional slate has one common item in their legislative agenda: reclaiming the city's so-called "crown jewels."

The so-called lost jewels, include the 48-hectare Rizal Park and Intramuros, which are managed by the Intramuros Administration; the Rizal Memorial Stadium supervised by the Philippine Sports Commission, and the Manila's North and South harbors, which are being administered by the Philippine Ports Authority.

For Roces, having city representatives pushing the same agenda as the mayor could lead to a more progressive city, as the legislators could channel their funds from the national government to local projects.

"This is not good, when you have a dynasty. They could do what they want to do," said Angping.

He related that the mayor never once invited the city's representatives to talk about the projects for the city over lunch or dinner.

Atienza has always advocated local autonomy in terms of governance.

He insists that city representatives devote themselves to legislating for the locality, and leave development projects to the local government executives.

In the Sampaloc district, another member of a known political family is seeking a congressional seat.

Manuel Bagatsing, son of former Manila mayor Ramon Bagatsing, is running to represent the 4th district.

Two of his brothers, Don Don and Amado, served in the Lower House from 1988 to 1998, representing the 4th and 5th districts, respectively.

He is facing incumbent Rodolfo Bacani of the LP, and two other independents, Jose Palma Icaonapo Jr. and Joel Almazar Sarza.

Deadly joke

ROBERT Pedroso, 26, told a joke to entertain his drinking buddies in Sta. Cruz, Manila, before dawn yesterday not expecting that it would lead to his death.

Pedroso was stabbed to death reportedly by Nelson Acabal, a fishball vendor from M. Hizon Street, Sta. Cruz, who is at large.

According to the police, Acabal thought that Pedroso cracked a joke to make fun of him. *Tarra Quismundo*

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More footbridges to rise in Metro

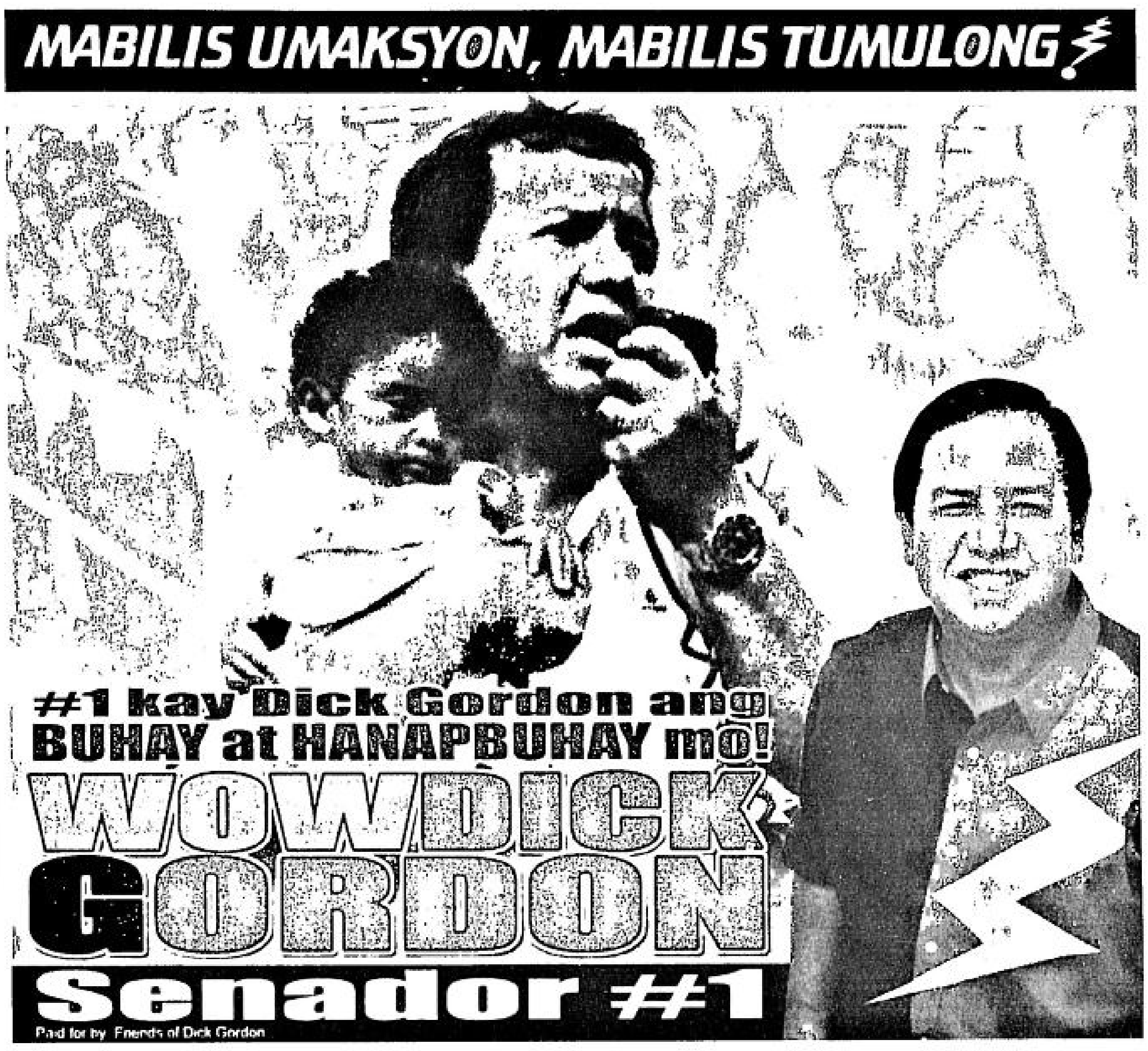
THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) yesterday announced that 14 more footbridges would be built along major thoroughfares with the release of P200 million for the project.

MMDA Deputy Chair Cesar Lacuna said the additional footbridges would be constructed along Munoz, C-5, Marcos Highway, Tandang Sora and Edsa.

"This is actually the second phase of this project," Lacuna said. The first phase involved the construction of nine footbridges with the initial P100 million budget released last year.

Lacuna said that with the footbridges, the agency's clearway scheme implemented on most of Metro Manila's major thoroughfares would finally be realized.

Lacuna said a total of 94 sites would host footbridges to prevent pedestrian accidents and increase travel time through the clearway scheme. *Margaux Ortiz*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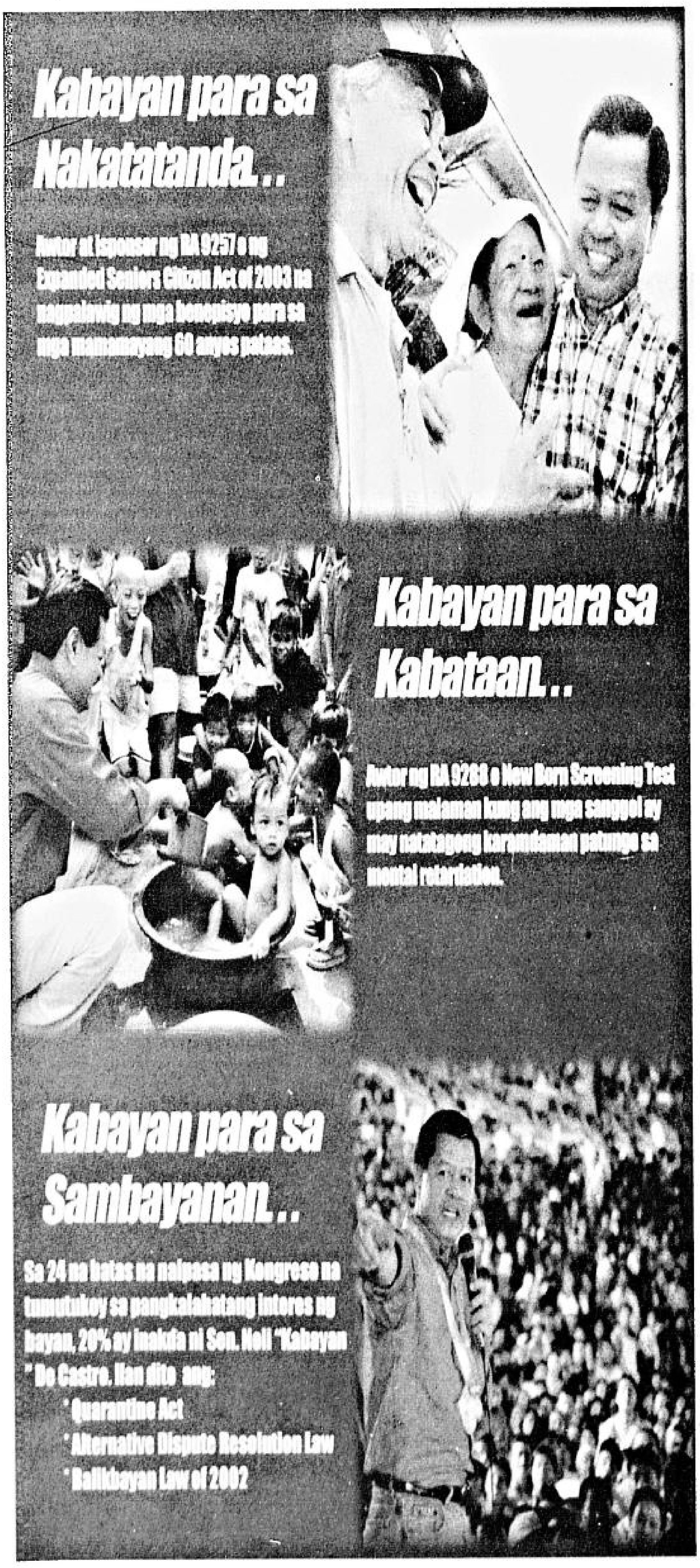
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Metro

E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

9 of 10 NPD cops can't shoot straight

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

WHAT is more frightening than a police force that has no guns? Could it be a police force where majority of the members are not qualified to handle a gun?

If that were so, then people living within the jurisdiction of the Northern Police District would have something to bring their knees shaking.

Initial results of a marksmanship proficiency training conducted for NPD police personnel showed that only six percent of the initial batch of 203 lawmen who undertook the tests qualified as marksman shooters.

Based on the standards used in the proficiency test, the highest status would have been expert. This would be followed by a sharpshooter then by a shooter under marksman status.

Only 12 of the 203 policemen qualified as marksmen. The rest, including police · commissioned officers and Special Weapons and Tactics (Swat) operatives, failed to make it as "qualified shooters."

District Director Marcelino Franco, however, explained that the low results were because of the high standards used in the test.

He added that most of their men had not had regular practice or training in target shooting.

And for that Franco blamed lack of funding.

For instance, Franco noted that to push through with this year's proficiency tests, he and some of his fellow officials donated their own ammunition and target boards. Otherwise, not all policemen could participate in the training.

Many policemen have long been complaining of inadequate support in terms of logistics. Some Swat members have complained to the INQUIRER that apart from paying for the gasoline for their motorcycles, they also spent their own money to buy additional ammunition.

The government provides some ammunition, but these are not enough for sustained operations.

The marksmanship tests began on April 13 but was suspended on April 28 for the policemen to concentrate on the elections. There are still 134 policemen who would still have to undergo the test.

But even if all 134 remaining lawmen proved capable, there would still be more policemen classified as not qualified according to standards set by the NPD.

"We want our policemen to always have the upper hand against criminals," Franco said. He pointed out that being proficient in using a firearm was very important in police operations.

In some high profile robbery cases last year, the robbers had high power guns and appeared to be highly skilled in using them.

In an earlier interview, Franco said policemen who would get high ratings would receive special awards. Those who would rate low would be recommended for further training.

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QC blaze kills old man, leaves 4,000 homeless

By Tina Santos

FIRE swept through a densely-populated community in Quezon City Saturday night and left a man dead and eight others injured.

When the seven-hour blaze was put out at 5:10 a.m. yesterday, at least 2,000 shanties inside a 30-hectare area at the corner of Agham Road and Quezon Avenue were razed.

Insp. Samuel Tadeo of the Quezon City Fire Bureau, said some 4,000 persons from Sitio San Roque, Barangay Bagong Pag-Asa, were affected.

8,000 homes

However, as of press time, Mayor Feliciano Belmonte said the city's Social Welfare Department was still conducting a census on the number of victims.

Barangay officials placed the number of houses in the compound at 8,000, according to Tadeo.

Damage was initially placed at P30 million.

Killed was Lorenzo Galvez, 61, who lived on Capricorn Street.

Galvez's wife told investigators that her husband failed to escape because of his condition as a polio victim.

Tadeo added that eight people, who have yet to be identified, suffered minor injuries due to falling debris and were brought to East Avenue Medical Center for treatment.

Candle for lighting

The blaze began at Rosario Fuentes' two-story house on Aris Street, the second floor of which she leased to a certain Lina Roseno.

Arson investigator FO3 Fortunato Alde said Roseno's room had no electricity and that she was using candles for lighting.

Firefighters had a hard time putting out the blaze because the passageways were too narrow for fire trucks and the area did not have fire hydrants.

Several firefighters from different areas in Metro Manila helped put out the blaze, which reached the general alarm.

Other 'Mathay' worries former city mayor

FORMER Quezon City Mayor Ismael "Mel" Mathay Jr. yesterday urged the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to clarify its list of official candidates in the city, particularly for the mayoralty post, to avoid confusion among the voters.

Mathay, who is running under the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, said the Comelec should tell members of the Board of Inspectors in the city that he was the only Mathay in the list of candidates for mayor.

The former local chief executive sought the clarification after he received reports that "Mathay" votes would be questioned by his opponents because there had initially been two candidates with the same surname.

Nephew

He said his nephew, Christian Mathay, earlier filed a certificate of candidacy also for the mayoral post.

But Christian's COC had been withdrawn as early as Jan. 6, Mathay said, adding that the withdrawal was approved by the Comelec en banc on recommendation of the law department in Minute Resolution 04-0069 promulgated on Feb. 13.

The withdrawal was also the subject of a memorandum by Director Esmeralda Amora Ladra of the Comelec-NCR and the joint memorandum of the district election officers of Comelec in Quezon City, he added.

"Any Mathay vote should be credited to me," Mathay said.

But to avoid confusion, he added that the Comelec should ensure the name Christian Mathay was deleted from the list of candidates. *Tina Santos*

MONDAY,
MAY 3, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SPORTS

A25

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Assistant Editor Edwin M. Villanueva

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Compiled by L. Mangulat

BASKETBALL: NBA Playoffs 2004- Lakers vs Spurs, Game 1, Western Semifinals; 7:30 a.m. (r-10 p.m.) Solar Sports; 8 p.m., IBC 13 - Los Angeles seeks revenge against San Antonio as they start their semifinal series at the SBC Center.

NBA Greatest Games - Warriors vs Bullets, Game 5, 1975 Finals; 10 a.m.; Solar Sports - Golden State defeats Washington in a four game sweep and capture its first NBA Championship in west coast history. Rick Barry is named NBA Finals' MVP.

NBA Anthology - Clutch City; 8:30 p.m.; ESPN - Take a trip down memory lane and see how the Houston Rockets captured their second straight title in 1995.

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2004 TOUR AIR 21

Overall Individual standings After Stage 17

1. R. Tanguilig (PLDT) 70:28.59 hrs.
2. L. Reynante (Postmen) 4:51 mins. behind
3. A. Primero (Dole) 7:41 mins. behind
4. J. Calderon (Beer na Beer) 8:19 mins. behind
5. L. Atiano (Mail and More) 8:45 mins. behind
6. R. Gorantes (Metro Drug) 10:11 mins. behind
7. E. Domingo (Postmen) 13:19 mins. behind
8. B. Ravina (VAT Riders) 14:39 mins. behind
9. S. Barnachea (Mail & More) 16:20 mins. behind
10. V. Espiritu (Beer na Beer) 18:39 mins. behind

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TANGUILIG (31) keeps close watch on Lloyd Reynante (left) during the Manila Criterium lap, then raises the champion's trophy as winner of the Air21 Tour Pilipinas.

ROMY HOMILLADA

TOUR PILIPINAS CHAMP

Well worth it for Tanguilig

By Marc Anthony Reyes

HE GAVE up a high-paying career in information technology to pursue his passion for cycling.

Yesterday, Rhyan Tanguilig proved it was well worth it.

The 25-year-old rider from Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya finally hit it big after capturing the 2004 Air21 Tour Pilipinas overall individual championship at the Rizal Park.

With his arms raised high, Tanguilig crossed the finish line with the third group just a few seconds from the unheralded winner of the 17th and final stage to lay claim to the P200,000 champion's purse.

The PLDT team captain received his prize from Sen. Noli De Castro, who represented President Macapagal-Arroyo, a no-show at the last minute. Tanguilig also won P68,000 for winning the Killer Lap in the 15th stage to grab the overall lead for good, for wearing the yellow jersey five times and for his share of the team prize.

"I knew right from the start that I will win this year," said Tanguilig, whose conquest of the Baguio-to-Baguio stage ended the bids of all pretenders to the crown, including veteran Enrique Domingo and Lloyd Reynante of Postmen.

"*Mabigat ang mga nakalaban ko pero siguro talagang ako ang nakatakdang manalo* (My rivals were tough but I think I was really destined to win this year)," said Tanguilig, who only started competing in 1997 using a bike he got as gift from his uncle Maximo Del Campo. He placed 11th in his Tour debut in 1998.

Tanguilig's explosive form in the mountains came a day after he lost the overall lead to Domingo as he struggled, due to a cold, in the stage from Vigan to Baguio. "In one stretch going up, I stepped down from my bike and did some stretching," he said in Filipino.

With the bikathon in mothballs starting in 1999, Tanguilig finished a degree in computer technology and was eventually hired as a technician by the AMA Computer Learning Center.

When FedEx boss Bert Lina put the Tour back on the road last year, the call of cycling proved too hard to resist. He quit his job and finished fourth overall in the Tour won by Arnel Quirimit.

"*Sabi ko, kung mamimili ako sa dalawang trabaho, eh di doon na ako sa masaya ako* (If I have to choose between two careers, then I will pick the one I enjoy most)," Tanguilig explained.

Tanguilig was credited with a time of 70 hours, 28 minutes and 59 seconds for the 2,758-km journey that started April 15, besting Reynante by four minutes and 51 seconds. Albert Primero was third, 7:41 behind.

Overshadowed by Tanguilig's victory was Paulo Manapul's triumph in the 17th stage after a mass finish. The unheralded Marsman rider won P50,000 courtesy of M. V. Pangilinan on top of the regular P10,000 stage prize.

The 35-year-old Domingo, the Postmen skipper who is the sentimental favorite, took home P225,000 mostly from his share of the top team

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VIEWING MARQUEZ

Pacquiao, Roach don't see eye-to-eye

By Recah Trinidad

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Actually, there's nothing philosophically wrong with a fighter and his trainer not seeing eye-to-eye in viewing the main opponent.

After all, they will perform two distinct tasks come fight time. It was just natural for Roach to be strict, meticulous and overcautious.

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"Yes, he's in a lot better shape than when he beat Barrera," Roach confided after seeing Pacquiao through a series of drills yesterday.

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Well worth it for Tour Pilipinas champ

From page A25

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But the richest rider proved to be Reynante, the son of former two-time champion Maui. Lloyd claimed P380,000 in winnings, bagging P150,000 as runner-up, P50,000 as King of the Mountains and sharing in the P1 million team champion prize.

Tanguilig arrived at the finish line flanked by Reynante and 1996 Tour champ Victor Espiritu of Beer na Beer, his teammates in the RP Trade Team which will again see action in Korea in June.

Quirimit, the Tanduay team captain who was stricken with the flu and conceded defeat after only three stages, managed to finish 19th.

The top three overall winners belong to the much-criticized Trade Team, with Primero winning a total of P180,000.

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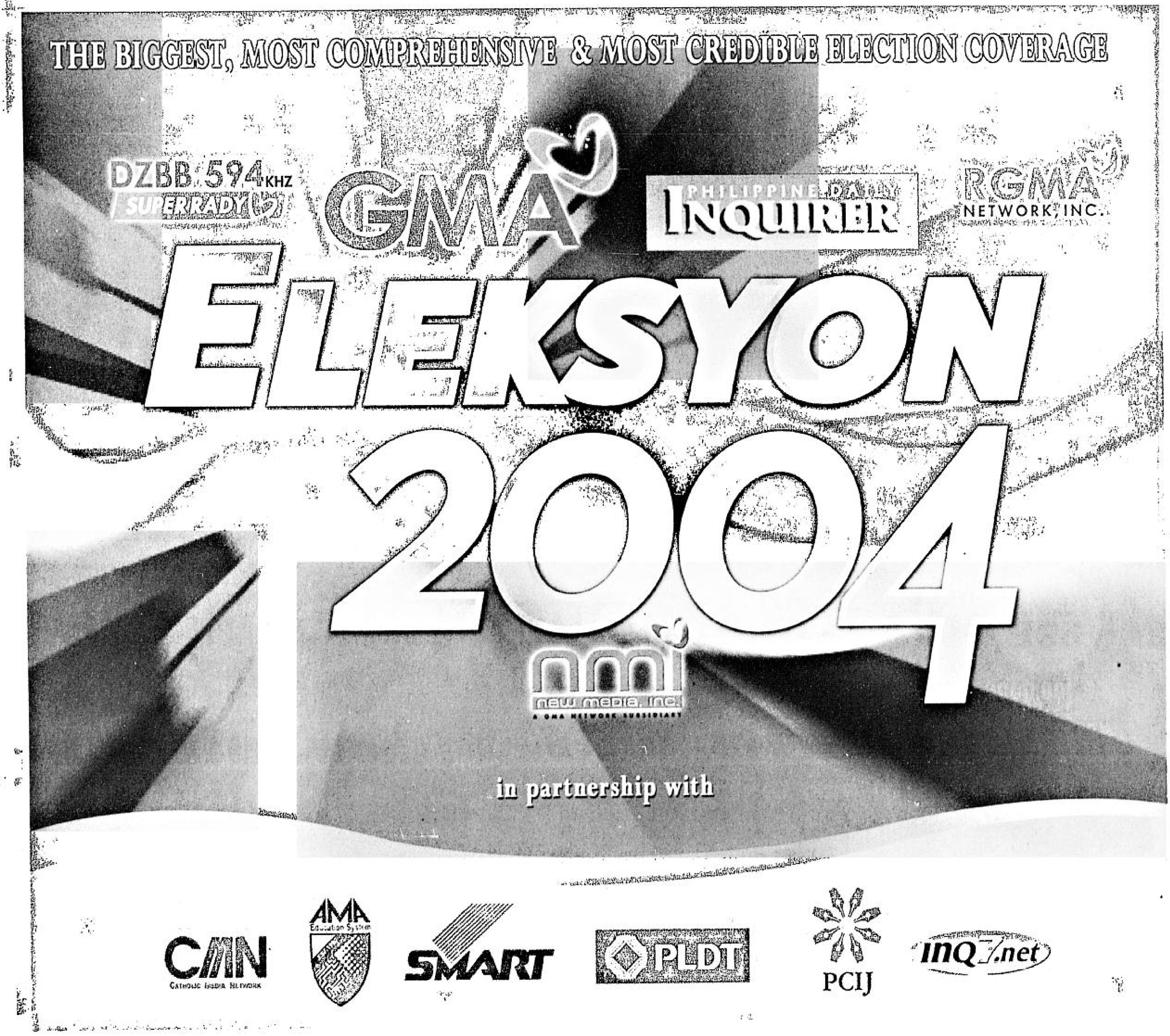

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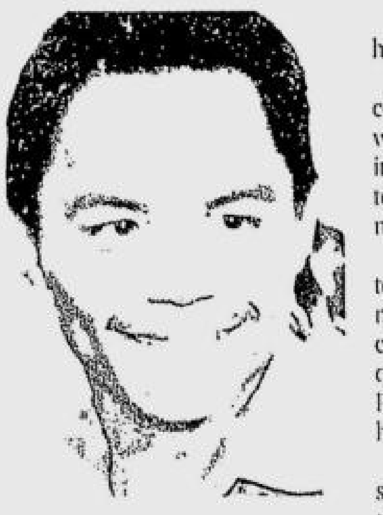

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Grieving in dear, old LA

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

LOS ANGELES—Saturday morning in LA is an old lady, seventy something and made up like a doll, asking for early directions to the laundry counter that used to be in that corner.

There's no one to run the errand for her, in much the same way the police appear helpless against grimy, fumbling winos rambling down the street to nowhere, after a night of bottomless boozing.

Nobody can stop this place from playing lost.

But no, this is not Manila: All cars stop on the red signal, pedestrians cross only when the green light flashes.

There's supposed to be law and order out here.

However, the lost lady rediscovered peace of mind only after she was told the laundry room has not closed, has not changed location, but is actually on the opposite side of the road.

***

She smiled a young, wan smile, begged forgiveness, turned around and crossed to her Saturday morning destination.

She finally knew where she was headed.

Just another morning here, close to the famous Sunset Strip.

This is the heart of Hollywood, where Manny Pacquiao, pride and joy of countless Pinoys both at home and abroad, trains at the world-famous World Boxing Club gym of the similarly famous Freddie Roach.

***

This reporter actually rushed down here wiping a tear all the way onto the early morning jet.

Just like countless others, he has irrevocably lost a trusted teacher and long-time ally, National Artist Nick Joaquin, whose one final wish, after having given the world immeasurable wisdom, joys with his pen, was never, never to be made a nuisance to others.

If he ever died, Nick kept wishing repeatedly, Lord make it swift, no ifs no buts, no sick, soggy farewells.

That, you bet, had been granted, as Nick had faded and left very, very quietly. In all dignity, too.

***

It always invited guffaws whenever Nick would explain, half-smiling, how they should properly dispose of him.

Wrapped up in an old mat, thrown into the river—"*balutin nyo ko ng banig, itapon, ipaanod sa ilog.*"

Call it pride or whatever. But Nick was too pure and uncomplicated to wish for decoration and fanfare.

He did not like to be ogled at, explained one of his dear nieces.

He had vehemently refused to enter the hospital, despite rapid loss of weight in his final weeks.

Why? Because, Nick had explained, he did not like tubes, whatever, etc. in his nose, he hated gadgets anywhere around his arms and body.

In short, he did not like to look and feel like a Christmas tree.

He did not train to be one.

He did not like jewels, shiny trappings.

In fact, the only reason he had agreed to receive the National Artist award from the Marcos administration, which he had dreaded, was in exchange for the freedom of a dear friend, Pete Lacaba, a younger literary light who was incarcerated for having opposed Martial Law and the dictatorial regime.

***

As he wished it, Nick, after passing away early in the morning', was cremated that same evening last week.

He would have sneezed out loud if he had not had his way.

He would have jumped up and screamed if they had displayed his body during a wake.

As that favorite niece explained, what he abhorred most was being referred like someone who seemed like sleeping under the glass—"*parang natutulog lang.*"

"*Patay na nga raw, paano magtutulog-tulugan?*" Nick was supposed to have protested in advance.

He must've been staring at death in the eye for quite some time.

Just waiting for the marching order. That was how dear Nick would mumble how he felt death creeping at his back.

Truth was he had been mouthing that line since over two decades ago.

But, full with a zest for life as was, Nick must've gone tired waiting for the call.

***

For the first time in our regular New Year Day lunchtime visits, when he would regularly spread out a feast in his sala, Nick suddenly appeared gray, gaunt, half gone last Jan. 1 despite his usual cold bottle of beer.

He had been out till 4 a.m. with a dear lady friend, often mistaken for his mistress, but who was actually the widow of a dear old friend who had died of cancer.

As he had vowed to the dear departed chum, Nick took care of the widow through thick and thin. Even when he could no longer take care of his own health.

"Oh I feel so tired I could sleep the whole day," he said on his last New Year's Day here.

Tired, yes. But as in past many times, we again waited for him to come back, swig his beer again, spread cheer in his old, inimitable, saintly way.

Then he started to be scarce.

He skipped old functions, like birthdays of chums in that group he loved to call his true people.

Upon being told on the phone recently that his *kumpadre*, the literary great Wilfrido Nolledo, had perished in California, Nick wept quietly.

He had been left to live alone in his old, simple house in Barrio Onse in San Juan following the death of his younger sister, Nene, a spinster.

But Ding Nolledo's passing could have led Nick to feel entirely orphaned.

When it was least expected, Nick also made an unannounced exit.

Unlike that lost lady, Nick made sure he did not have to ask for directions.

He made and followed his own rules.

He abhorred, refused high office that was many times offered to him on a silver platter.

He did not like to be a nuisance.

He knew all the while where he was headed.

His was one death that was indeed too many.

We are all orphaned many, many times over.

Tagaytay tops nat'l inter-provincial chess

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Top seed Tagaytay City made it two in a row in team competitions when it overcame Bulacan "A," 2.5-1.5, to clinch the crown in the National Inter-Provincial Chess Team Championship Saturday at the provincial capitol here.

Jerome Balico scored Tagaytay's lone victory—and the clincher—over Bulacan's board 3 player Noel Dela Cruz. The three other matches ended in draws. Board 1 gold medalist GM Joey Antonio Jr., board 2 topnotcher Rolly Martinez and Edmundo Gatus drew with GM-candidate Mark Paragua, Asian zonal champ Ronald Dableo and Roel Abelgas, respectively.

Tanong ng Bayan
INQ TV
Ngayong Alas-10 Ng Gabi

Laglagan sa halalan: sinong mabibiktima?

Ngayong isang linggo na lang ang natitira sa kampanya, hindi maiiwasan ang tinatawag na junking.
Ang tanong: sino ang malamang ilalaglag?
At bakit nangyayari ang laglagan?
Ang sagot nina senatorial candidates Pong Biazon, Miriam Defensor Santiago, Kit Tatad, at Boots Anson Roa, senator Francis Pangilinan, opposition spokesman Mike Romero, political analyst Joel Rocamora, at INQUIRER columnist Neal Cruz.
Tunghayan ngayong alas-10 ng gabi, sa ABC.
(May replay bukas, alas-8 ng umaga.)
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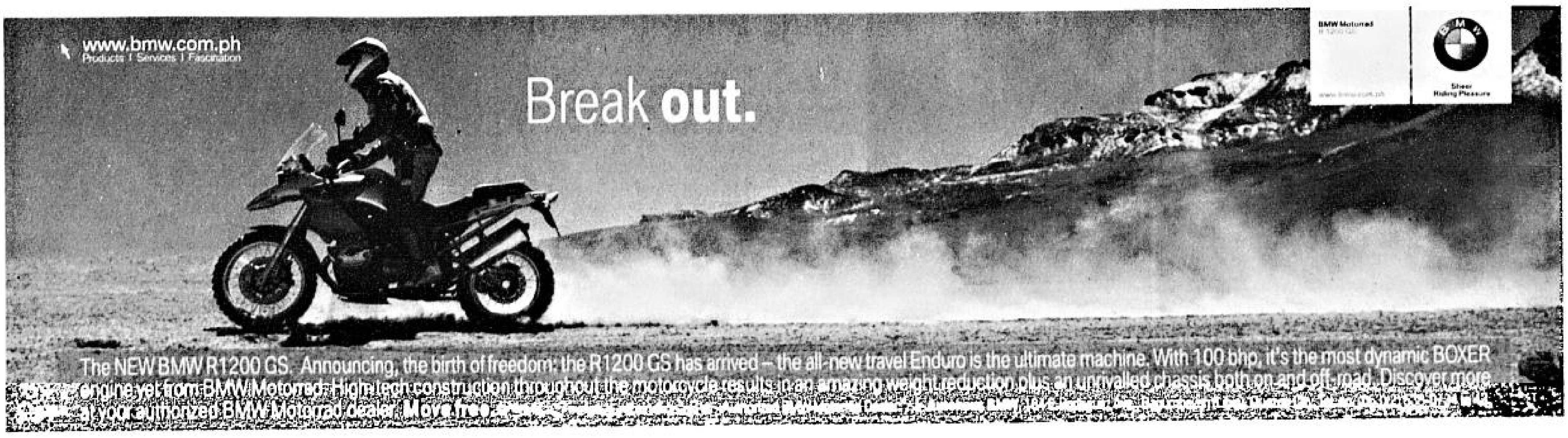
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Ramirez pulls off twin victories

ROSARIO, Batangas—Veteran Kookie Ramirez and Rey Reyes scored back-to-back wins in their respective divisions yesterday at the start of the 2004 PCSO Grand Prix at the Batangas Racing Circuit here.

Ramirez, carrying the colors of Petron Ultron, showed class and experience as he pulled away early from the pack to rule both races in the National Touring Car Championship sponsored by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Pilipinas Shell, Toyota Motors Philippines, Norkis Yamaha, Kilton Motors and MOF Company.

He timed 1:50.147 in the second lap of Race 1 to open a wide margin and claim victory over Ferdie Ong of Bosch-Polo and third placer Miguel Ramirez of Petron Ultron.

Kookie was faster in the second race with 1:49.27 in the third lap to complete his back-to-back win against Dominic Bon and Miguel Ramirez.

Reyes, driving for AF3-Auto Klasse, dominated Class B over Alvin Dayrit and Reggie Ramos.

Also grabbing the spotlight was young rookie driver Tyson Sy, who won four trophies on his first try.

After ruling both Promotional classes in the Asian Formula 3, the 16-year-old Sy stamped his class in both races of the Formula Toyota Cup over two talented female drivers—runner-up Gaby de la Merced and Michelle Bumgarner.

Sharing the limelight were Miguel Lazaro and Renan Morales who split honors in the National Junior Touring Car Championship.

Lazaro topped the National Junior Touring Car Championship and the Novice class in Race 1 over Morales and third placer Christian Aguilar.

But Morales showed the way in Race 2 as he bagged both trophies in the National Junior Touring Car Championship and the Novice division over Lazaro and Aguilar.

Bauya no match for SA pug

PHILIPPINE bantamweight champion Joel Bauya was a big flop in his first crack at the WBC International bantam title, losing by technical knockout in the first round to South African Vusi Malinga Saturday at the Nasrec Arena in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Malinga knocked down the flat-footed Bauya three times, forcing referee Alfred Buqwana to stop the scheduled 12-rounder bout at the end of the opening round.

Bauya now has a win-loss-draw record of 15-4-2.

Meanwhile, Edmund "El Martillo" Velayo put up a very gallant fight before losing by unanimous decision to Thai Oleydong Sithsanerchai in their 12-round fight last week in Bangkok, Thailand.

"It was a good performance by Velayo but the judges gave it to Oleydong," said Tony Aldeguer who owns the ALA Gym where Velayo trains. *Salven L. Lagumbay*

Bata, Django collide with crack Taiwanese

EFREN "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante will not only have to contend with Taiwan's finest cue masters but an expected hostile crowd as well when they compete in the fourth leg of the rich San Miguel Asian 9-ball Tour beginning Friday in Taiwan.

Reyes, who swept the first two legs of the five-stage series sponsored by San Miguel Beer, tries to bounce back from his setback in Hong Kong two weeks ago, where he bowed in the semifinals to eventual champion Yang Ching-shun.

Yang will be at the forefront of a crack seven-player host squad in the $50,000 event.

Chao Fong-pang, considered the dean of Taiwanese pros, is also in the fold. The two-time world champion is gunning for a first-ever win after losing the crown to Reyes in Vietnam and reaching the semis in Hong Kong.

Chen Huang-wu, meanwhile, makes his much-awaited return to the tour, organized by ESPN Star Sports Management Group, following his loss to Reyes in the semifinals of the Singapore leg.

Completing the host's roster are Hsia Hui-kai, Wang Hung-hsiang, Kuo Po-cheng and Hung Lu-kung.

But they will range against an equally imposing Philippine squad, with Bustamante, the world No. 1, also expected to atone for his string of so-so finishes and score a breakthrough win heading to the final leg in Manila on May 28-29.

The top 10 players after five legs will get automatic slots to this year's World Pool Championship slated July 10-18, also in Taiwan.

Lee Van Corteza, Antonio Gabica and Warren Kiamco, will also be hopping on the flight from Manila. The Tour also welcomes back veteran Pinoy shooter Leonardo "Dodong" Andam, a former World Pool Championship quarterfinalist.

iguel Asian 9-
San

REYES takes careful aim at his shot. PDI PHOTO

YMCA jins shine with six golds

THE YMCA Taekwondo Club dominated the SM Summer Sports-Baguio Championships, winning six gold medals in the men's and women's divisions held over the weekend at SM Baguio.

Domingo Rico Jr. and Billy Joe Soria sparked the YMCA bets' romp with a 1-2 finish in the finfly category with Mark Aldrin Ric copping the gold in the light-welterweight division.

The YMCA lady jins won four golds in their side of the event, with Sheena Asan, Lalaine Cercenia, Emmanuelle Bitog and Sheena Gregorio bagging the golds in the feather, light-welter, middle and finweight divisions.

St. Vincent won two golds, courtesy of Gisella Mae Arellano and Kristine Loman.

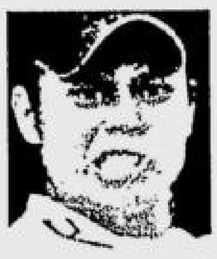
Arcilla downs Victorino for 2nd straight crown

TOP seed Johnny Arcilla defeated second seed Joseph Victorino, 6-4, 6-2, yesterday to rule the first Philippine Sinter Corp. (PSC) Men's Open Tennis Championships in Villanueva, Misamis Oriental.

It was the second straight title this year for the 23-year-old Arcilla following his victory in the Adiong Cup held in Marawi City last January.

"It's good to win again. I hope I can keep this winning streak," said Arcilla, who won 10 titles last year, including a four-leg sweep of the P1-million Cebuana Lhuillier Circuit.

"Every match against Joseph is tough," said Arcilla, who received the P20,000 top purse and trophy from PSC vice president Raul Noble, TSADA Tennis Foundation Phils. president lawyer Tibs Palasan and training director Mario Craiz.



ARCILLA

The top-ranked pair of Arcilla and Victorino routed fourth seed Joel Palao and Danilo Sajonia, 6-0, 6-1, to pocket the doubles title and P10,000 cash.

De Guzman brods triumph

DE GUZMAN brothers Ian and Irwin bagged the 21-under and 18-under titles, respectively, in the Toby's-Philta Juniors Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center yesterday.

Ian, seeded No. 2 in the 21-under class, shocked top seed Jandrick de Castro, 6-3, 6-4, while Irwin won the 18-under title over ailing fifth seed Nestor Celestino Jr., 6-7 (3), 6-2, (ret.).

Fourth seed Pablo Olivarez II downed third seed Russell Arcilla Jr., 6-1, 6-4, to clinch the boys' 16-under title. Olivarez, seeded No. 1 in the 14-under division, defeated second seed El Santo Santos, 6-3, 6-3, in the final.

In the boys' 12-under division, second seed Kim Ivor Saraza of Naga City pocketed his second consecutive title after posting a 6-3, 6-3 upset win over top seed Akio Hari Ong Sy.

Fourth seed Tim Polero, an incoming grade 4 student at the Fort Aguinaldo Elementary School, stunned second seed Sally Mae Siso, 6-4, 6-3, for his third straight unisex 10-under title.

In the girls' division, third seed Ivy de Castro outlasted Trudy Amoranto, 6-1, 3-6, 6-2, to claim the 18-under title. Amoranto, seeded No. 3 in the 16-under category, won the title over fourth seed Nikki Manalo, 7-5, 6-4.

Spring Cooking Oil-SP five banners NBC tilt

FOUR tough teams, led by Seven Lakes champion Spring Cooking Oil-San Pablo, will see action in the Panasonic-NBC-Iloilo Cup basketball tournament set this Wednesday at the University of San Agustin gym in Iloilo City.

The other contenders are the Baguio City Cardinals, the Cebu-GMC General Feeds of Kitty Uytengsu Tan and host Iloilo Basketball League president Robert Uy.

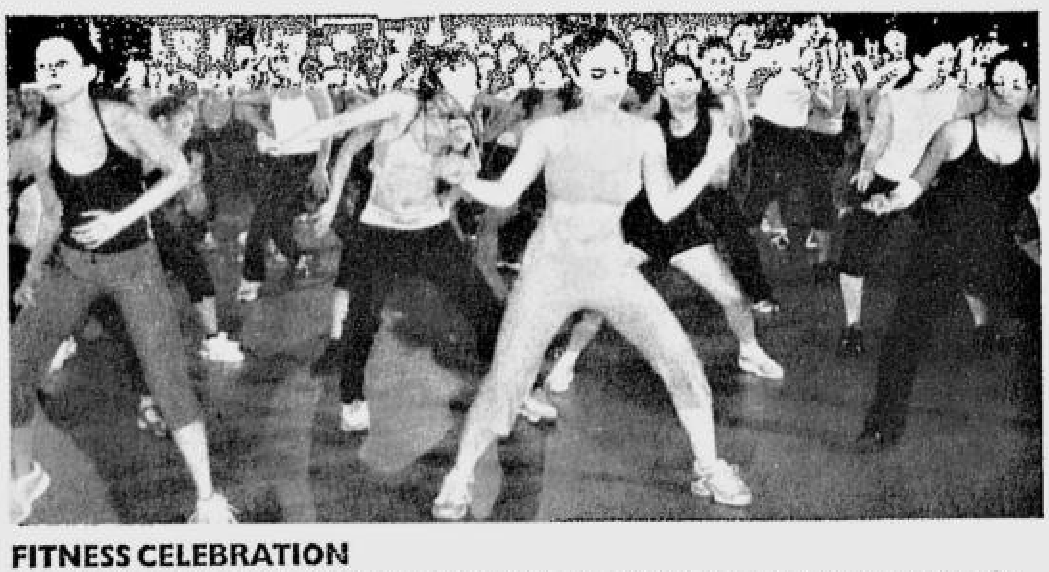
The Spring-SP team of shooting champion Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Mayor Florante "Boy" Aquino will be bannered by Rodel Manuel, Robin Mendoza, Mar Reyes, Ernani Opondulan, Chris Corbin and Melvin Taguines.

Iloilo is banking on Far Eastern U stalwart Rhagny Sinco, Carlos Sayon, San Sebastian's Allan Bryan Olaguer and St. Francis of Assisi's Eduardo Allado Jr.

Carrying the colors of Cebu-GMC General Feeds are Alex Cainglet, Bernie Ursal, Alfie Grijaldo, Rex Mangubat and Adrian Mamba, while the Cardinals will be led by Joel Bona, Sammy Ayodelle, Ryan Ancheta and Jeff Olaes.

The opening games on May 5 pit Cebu against Baguio at 5 p.m. and Spring-SP against Iloilo at 6:30.

The mini-series serves as a preview of the Panasonic-NBC national championship starting on May 22 in Baguio City and May 23 in Cagayan de Oro.



FITNESS CELEBRATION

It was truly a night to remember as women of all ages gathered recently at the NBC Tent for the Nike Women's Night Out, a fitness celebration presided over by Fitness First's top instructors. Participants moved and grooved to every beat of such popular fitness routines as Body Combat, Body Jam, Body Pump and Body Balance. The fun night was capped by the special awards given out to the ladies who perfectly exuded the Nike Beautiful attitude.

Taekwondo squad set to train in Seoul

THE PHILIPPINE Taekwondo Association launches its bid for an Olympic gold medal when it sends its three Athens-bound jins to Seoul today for a two-month special-training sponsored by Petron and the Philippine Sports Commission.

Flying to Seoul this afternoon are Sydney Olympian Donald David Geisler III, Tshomlee Go and Mary Antoinette Rivero, and Korean coach Tae Hyung Kim.

"We are optimistic about our chances in the Athens Olympics," said PTA president Robert Aventajado. "With proper training and the support of Petron and the PSC, we hope to win the country's first ever Olympic gold."

According to PTA vice president Sung Chon Hong, the training will give the Filipinos the chance to learn the latest fighting techniques.

The Filipinos will work out in different Korean gymnasiums in preparation for the Athens Games

SPORTSWATCH

Aya-ay, Arnol advance in Milo netfest

MAASIN, LEYTE—Amiel Aya-ay dumped Mcarter Arnol, 6-1, 6-1, in the boys' 12-under division to lead the opening day winners Saturday in the 2004 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop at the Maasin Tennis Club here. In the boys' 14-under category, Jun Ryan Montalbo tripped Louie Elnar, 6-1, 6-4, and Carl Dilegero ousted Anton Aya-ay, 6-4, 6-1. Cris John Arnol edged Christian Nodalo, 6-4, 6-3, to advance in the unisex 10-under class in the CTW-organized netfest celebrating Milo's 40 years in the local market and supported by Wilson balls, adidas and Sports Kids.

CCP Bobcats looking for new players

THE CCP Bobcats, overall champions of the Colleges and Universities Sports Association (Cusa) from 1998 to 2002 inclusive, are beefing up their lineups in preparation for this year's varsity battles. Athletes who wish to be part of the 2004-2005 squad are invited to try out for the men's basketball team coached by ex-PBA player-coach and former Olympian Elias Tolentino. Men's tryouts are scheduled at 3 p.m., Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays starting today. Applicants for the women's basketball team under coach Henry Serrano may attend the separate tryouts on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at 3 p.m. starting tomorrow. Varsity tryouts are also being conducted in men's and women's volleyball under coach Arnold Dino, table tennis under coach Rizaldy Fortunado, badminton under coach Voltaire Paez, chess under coach Anthony Raon and men's football under coach Ravelo Saluria. For inquiries, call Henry Serrano or Zaldy Fortuñado at 715-5170 to 75 loc. 123. Applicants must be high school graduates.

Golf-for-a-cause at Sta. Elena today

MORE than 170 executives from top companies in the country play a round of golf today to help the Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) raise funds to build daycare centers and other projects for children. The annual charity golf, to be held at the Sta. Elena Golf and Country Club in Cabuyao, Laguna, is sponsored by, among others, March Phils., Infostructure, McDonald's, Petron Corp., Smart Communications, Coca-Cola Export Phils., Foster Foods, Genosi, Havi Food Services Phils., Havi Food Services SEA, McCormick Phils., Nestlé Food Services, Omega Watches and Pacsports. Kenneth S. Yang, president of RMHC, said they aim to build more Bahay Bulilit daycare centers. There are already daycare centers in Makati, Mandaluyong and Quezon City. A Toyota RAV 4, an Omega watch and a complete set of Nike Slingshot golf clubs are hole-in-one prizes.

Olympia fighters rule Megamall meet

TEAM Olympia ran away with the overall championship in the novice class of the grade school division while Lourdes School of Mandaluyong edged four other teams to rule the advance side of the SM Summer Sports-Megamall Championship held Thursday and Friday at the SM Megamall. The Olympia jins swept the Group I-A2 category to underscore the team's romp in the tournament held under the auspices of the Philippine Taekwondo Association and hosted by the SM supermalls. Joel Codina bagged the gold, Jomar Lalacsan took the silver while Christian Lumandes and Jeremiah Serrano settled for bronze medals in the tournament exclusively for players 7-8 years old. Other winners for Team Olympia were Tristan Dayrit, John Paul Romero, Jeffrey de Leon, Nicholo Romulo, Terence Romero, Myrlita Lalacsan and Ellaine Guiangan. The Olympia jins capped their domination of the boys' and girls' sides by copping four silvers and seven bronze medals in the tournament organized by the International Management Group. UP Integrated School won three golds courtesy of Marco Gucilatar, Izza Casanare and Felicia Pilares. The Diliman-based squad also came away with four silvers and six bronze medals. The Lourdes jins, on the other hand, bagged two golds in the advance category through Gyle Genoso and Mark Dizon, who beat teammate Troy Baliqued. UPIS, Bonifacio Naval School, Caloocan and Olympia won one gold each.

'Sagupaan sa Tag-Araw' under way

A GUARANTEED prize of P300,000 is at stake in the "Sagupaan Sa Tag-Araw 3-Cock Derby" today at the air-conditioned Pasay City Cockpit. Hosts Orca and Friends, Kags Paliza and Aba Badiola said that aside from the guaranteed prize, bonus prizes will also be given in the derby sponsored by Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupaan Mite Free and Sagupaan B-50 Forten. The fastest kill champion gets a brand-new motorcycle, the second placer a 6-cubic foot refrigerator, the third placer a 21-inch color TV, and the fourth and fifth placers washing machines. The derby will start at 2 p.m. A total of 87 fights were held in last Friday's big-time 4-cock derby hosted by Benjie Lim. For inquiries, call 816-6750, 843-1890 and 843-1746.

A+ Ampalaya Banaba

BADMINTON SPONSOR: Top Indonesian player Belly Gunawan (left) and Carol Francisco pose next to the banner of Ampalaya Plus 3-in-1 food supplement, one of the sponsors of the formal launch of the Olympic Badminton Center in Libis, Quezon City. The facility, which opened yesterday, is reputedly the biggest badminton center in the country with 26 indoor and outdoor courts.

PCSO SILVER CUP: Horse owner Francis Trillana (center) receives the First Gentleman Silver Cup from PCSO general manager and acting chair Rosario Uriarte (second from right) following the victory of his horse, Red Star Rising, in the featured race held recently at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite. Joining in the post-race celebration were (from left) MJCI president Alfonso Reyno Jr., PCSO committee on races chair Jose Malang, Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, Philracom chair Jaime Dilag and commissioner Eduardo Jose.

Coke repulses Ginebra, ties for 2nd place

Games Wednesday (Araneta Coliseum)
4:45 p.m.—Shell vs. Purefoods
7:10 p.m.—Alaska vs. Sta. Lucia

By Musong Castillo, *Contributor*

REED-THIN and with very brittle knees, Mark Sanford continues to carry Coca-Cola even on borrowed time.

With replacements being contacted, Sanford, although playing in pain, remained a pain for the opposition as the Tigers edged Barangay Ginebra, 96-93, last night in the PBA Gran Matador Fiesta Conference.

Sanford scored 30 points, grabbed 13 rebounds and had three blocks to lead the Tigers to their third straight win, climbing into a tie with the Alaska Aces for second at 9-4.

The pain is both real and emotional, as coach Chot Reyes has made it known to Sanford that talks are ongoing with at least three prospects, including former Red Bull import Julius Nwosu.

"He knows that we are looking for a replacement," said coach Chot Reyes. "It's not his talent, or the lack of it, it's his knees. He was crying because of pain during the (halftime) break."

FedEx avoided the cellar later in the night, as John Ferriols hit a short stab in the final 11.1 seconds for a 100-98 victory over Red Bull.

The Express improved to 4-9, while the Thunder, who suited up yet another new import in Victor Thomas, fell to 6-7.

The scores:

First Game

COCA-COLA 96—Sanford 30, Cariaso 18, Reavis 11, Hugnatan 10, David 6, Abarrientos 6, Morano 5, Wainwright 4, Juinio 4, Avenido 2, Hawkins 0.

BARANGAY GINEBRA 93—Braggs 29, Menk 19, Santos 16, Helterbrand 10, Caguioa 9, Salvacion 6, Adducul 2, David 2.

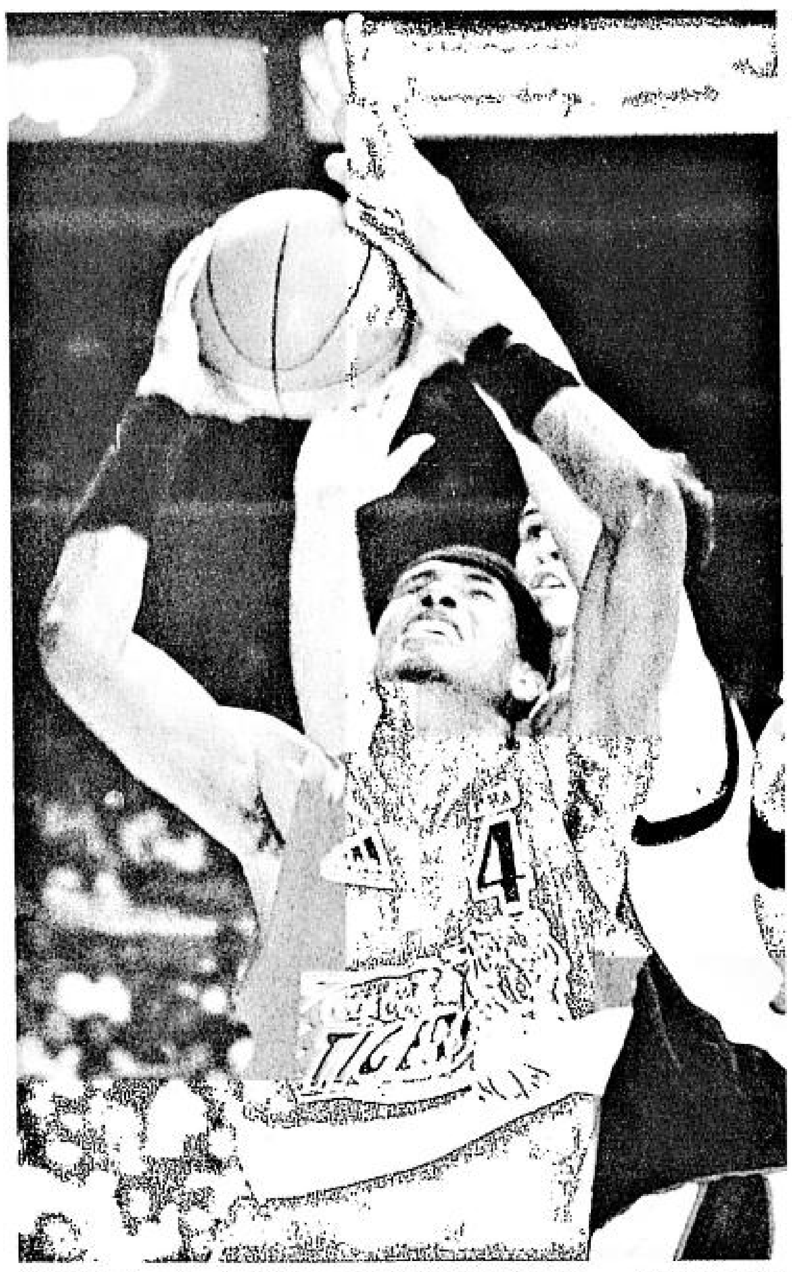
Quarters: 25-19; 44-all; 74-68; 96-93.

Second Game

FEDEX 100—Maddox 25, Meneses 14, Ferriols 13, Arboleda 13, Yap 9, Ritualo 9, Pingris 6, Rodriguez 5, De Ocampo 4, Billones 2.

RED BULL 98—Thomas 28, Harp 19, Se 12, Valenzuela 12, Pennisi 11, Villanueva 7, Torion 4, Lopez 3, Robinson 2, Baguio 0.

Quarters: 29-27; 52-47; 69-73; 100-98.



ERIC Menk gets a foul foiling a Raffy Reavis attempt. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

WGAP meet starts May 3 at Malarayat

THE WOMEN'S Golf Association of the Philippines starts its 2004 circuit on May 3 at the Malarayat Golf and Country Club. A total of 15 clubs will vie for top honors, team and individual categories in the golfest.

Eight legs, with competition in three classes, will comprise the circuit.

It will resume at Manila Golf Club for its second leg on May 17, 18, and 21, then move to Riviera June 21-22, Orchard-July 12, Forrest Hills-July 26, Southwoods-Aug. 10-11, Wack Wack-Sept. 21-22, and end at Sta. Elena on Oct. 25. Teams in the fold include Aguinaldo, Alabang, Canlubang, Forest Hills, Manila Golf, Manila Southwoods, Mt. Malarayat, Orchard, Philippine Navy, Riviera, Royal Northwoods, Sta. Elena, Valley, Golf, Villamor and Wack Wack. After the circuit is a showdown among the top five teams vying for the WGAP Cup Perpetual Trophy with the Ryder Cup format in November.

The quest for the top amateur golfer will be the main feature of the circuit. Newly elected WGAP president Nancy Ortiga has formulated a ranking point system based on gross scores and tournament standings.

Performances of the qualifying amateurs will be monitored with a year-long search applying on major tournaments such as the WGAP Circuit, the Luzvimin at Cebu Country Club on Aug. 18-20, the NGAP's Southern Ladies in Cagayan de Oro, DHL Amateur Open at Canlubang and Samsung Amateur Tour.

Bonds posts walk mark in SF's win

SAN FRANCISCO, California—A. J. Pierzynski had three hits and drove in two runs while Marquis Grissom drove in three more to lead the San Francisco Giants past the Florida Marlins, 6-3, on Saturday.

The game was also notable for the record set by Giants outfielder Barry Bonds for intentional walks.

With the Marlins refusing to pitch to him, as had been the case several times already this season, Bonds received four intentional walks, a record for a nine-inning game.

Bonds, who is batting .463, went 0-1 on the game, with him flying out to left field on the only time the Marlins pitched to him.

Brian Dallimore drove in the other run for San Francisco, who had nine walks in total.

Jason Schmidt (2-2) allowed three runs, two earned, on seven hits over seven innings for the win. Jason Christiansen and Matt Herges finished the eight-hitter, with Herges getting the last four outs for his ninth save.

Carl Pavano (2-1), who hit his first home run, was the loser on 7 2/3 innings, allowing five runs on six hits.

Meanwhile, in New York, Ruben Sierra homered twice and drove in seven runs, and Jon Lieber pitched into the eighth inning in his Yankees debut, leading New York over the Kansas City Royals, 12-4, on Saturday. *Reuters, AP*

Complete results:

AMERICAN LEAGUE—Cleveland 3, Baltimore 2 (13 innings); NY Yankees 12, Kansas City 4; Detroit 4, Seattle 2; Chicago 4, Toronto 3 (game one, 10 innings); Texas 4, Boston 3 (game one); Oakland 6, Tampa Bay 5; Anaheim 1, Minnesota 0; Toronto 10, Chicago 6 (game two); Texas 8, Boston 5 (game two).

NATIONAL LEAGUE—Colorado 3, Atlanta 2 (game one); San Francisco 6, Florida 3; Arizona 6, Philadelphia 4; Houston 10, Cincinnati 4; Chicago Cubs 4, St. Louis 2; Pittsburgh 8, Milwaukee 7 (10 innings); Atlanta 11, Colorado 7 (game two); San Diego 3, NY Mets 1; Los Angeles 5, Montreal 4.

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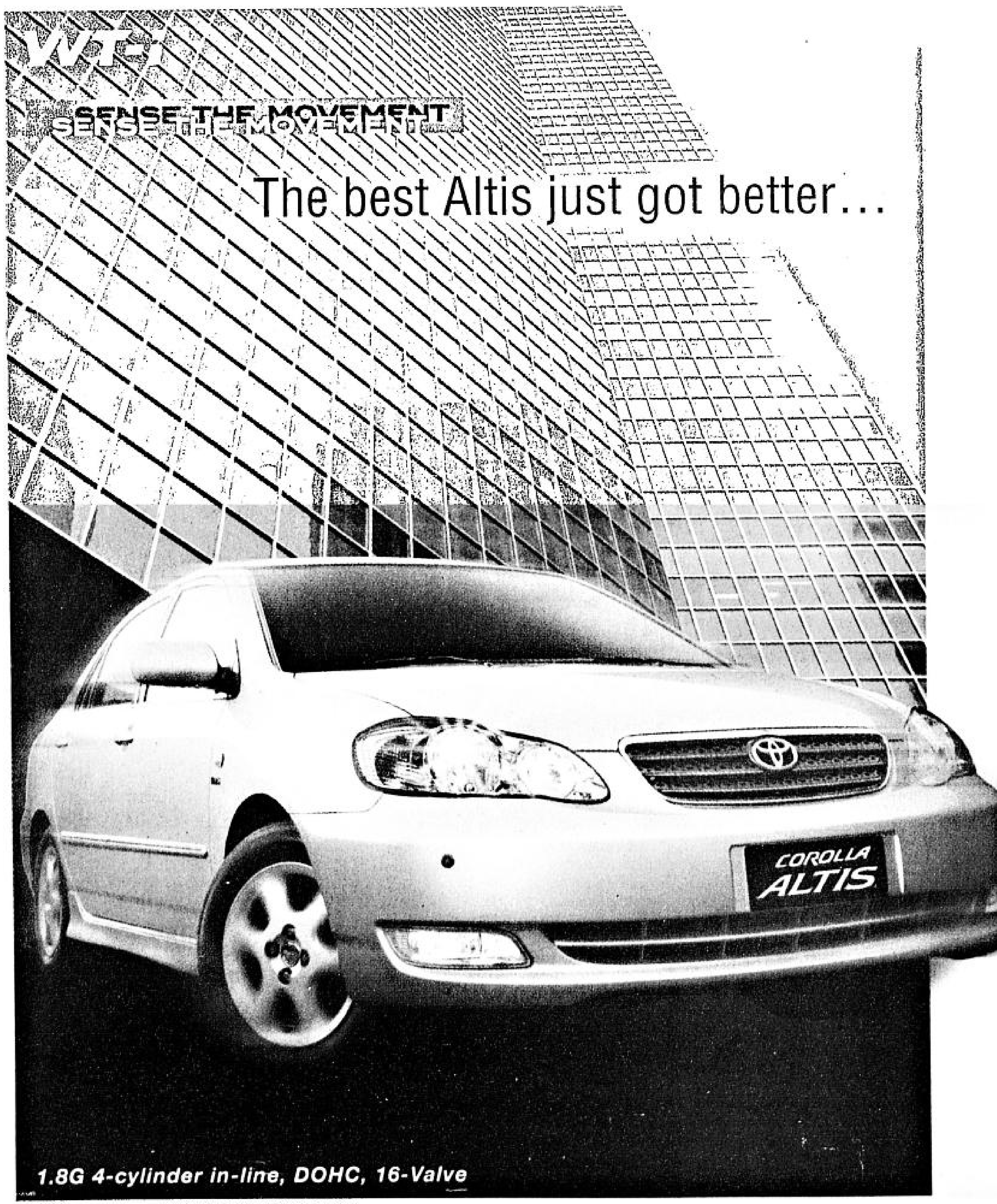
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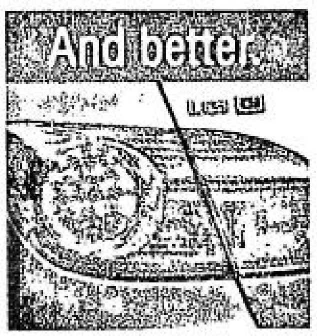

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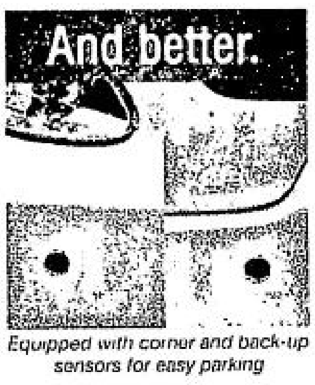

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TOYOTA

PLAYOFFS RESUME

Lakers-Spurs duel topbills 2nd round

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—In four of the past five seasons, the Los Angeles Lakers and San Anotnio Spurs have dueled in the National Basketball Association playoffs with the winner eventually claming the league crown.

So when the rivals begin their Western Conference series here Sunday to start the second round of the NBA playoffs, the reigning champion Spurs and perennial contending Lakers will have the intensity of a title showdown.

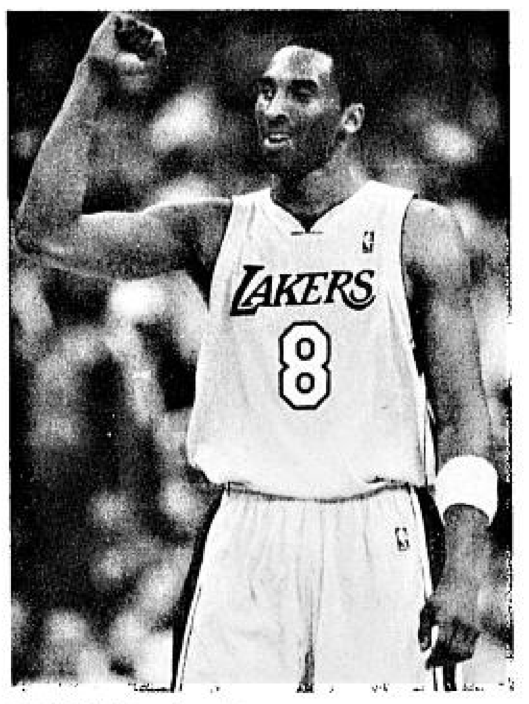
The Spurs ousted the Lakers in this round on the way to NBA crowns in 1999 and 2003 while Los Angeles eliminated San Antonio in this round in 2002 and in the 2001 conference finals.

Spurs coach Gregg Popovich compared the rivalry with American baseball's New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox, saying there was respect but not hatred.

"When you match up with each other so often, people make it into a rivalry," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "It's not like the Red Sox and the Yankees. They hate each other as far as I can see. This is just good competitive stuff."

Sacramento and Minnesota open the other Western Conference best-of-seven second-round affair on Tuesday. In the East, New Jersey and Detroit open Monday while top seed Indiana opens Thursday against either Miami or New Orleans.

Kobe Bryant, who has coped with a sexual assault trial as well as playoff pressure, joins Shaquille O'Neal in leading the Lakers, while Karl Malone and Gary Payton hope to finally claim an NBA crown in their first Lakers' season.


BRYANT: Coping with pressure. AP

To achieve that, the Lakers must dethrone the Spurs. Two-time NBA Most Valuable Player Tim Duncan and French guard Tony Parker spark San Antonio while defensive specialist Bruce Bowen will try and shut down Bryant.

"You can't beat them with momentum," Bryant said. "They are too steady. You have to be calculating, beat them possession by possession."

The Lakers have internal woes as well. Payton has been unhappy at being benched by coach Phil Jackson in crucial late-game situations.

"I don't know what's going on between them two, but I don't think it's something we should blow up right now," O'Neal said. "We're on a mission here and everyone needs to be on the same page. Hopefully, those two can work those issues out."

O'Neal's poor free throw shooting, a woeful 13-of-44 against Houston in the first round, prompted Jackson to rip into his star center by saying his effort from the line belonged "right in the garbage. It's awful."

"I've just told him time and time again that we cannot survive in these playoffs if he doesn't get his free-throw shooting in order. It's just like a turnover every time you miss two. It's like nothing happened but we turned the ball over, and it's a disheartening thing."

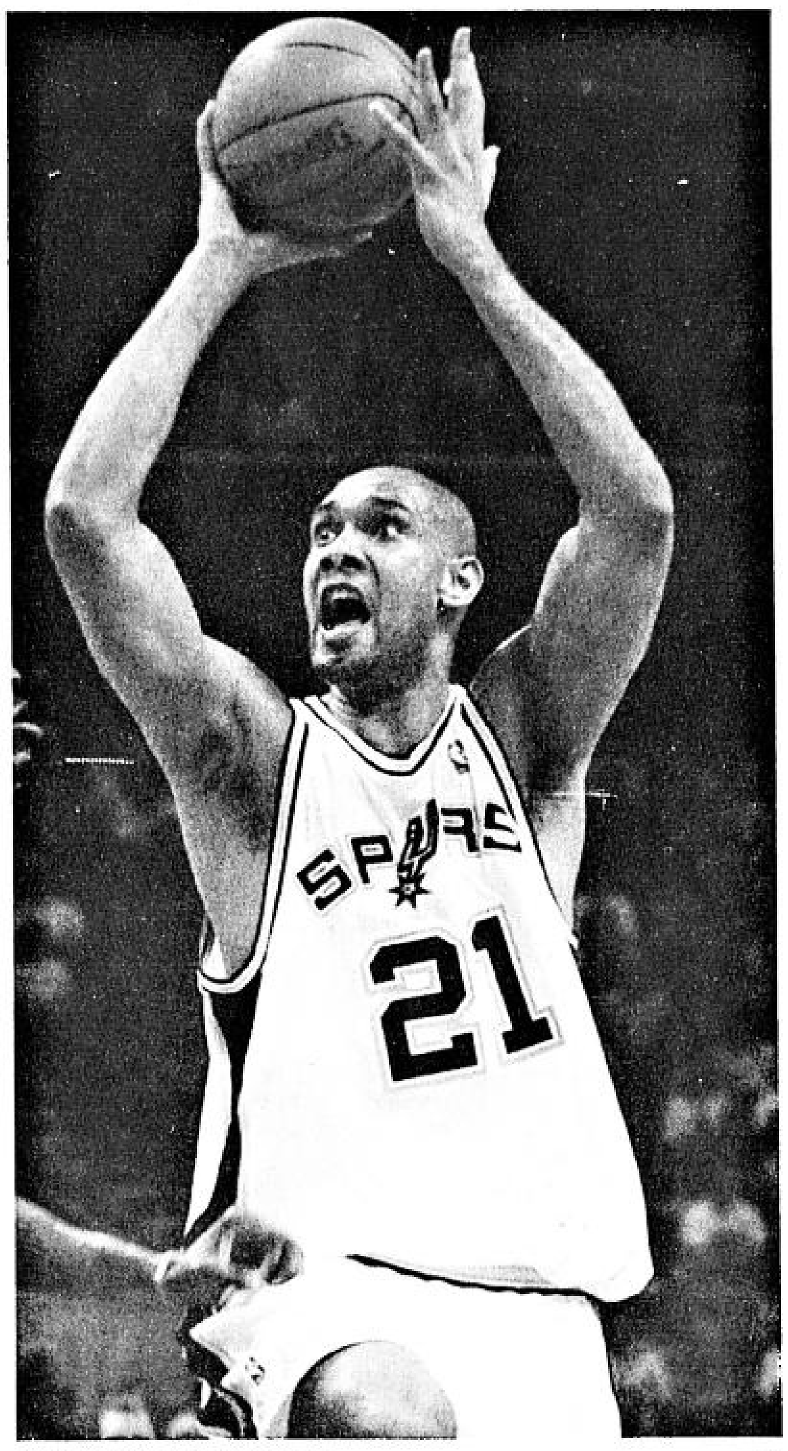
While the Minnesota Timberwolves have reached the second round for the first time and the Kings have a veteran-laden squad, the Lakers and Spurs are a combined 6-0 against the Kings and T-wolves in playoff history.

Minnesota's Kevin Garnett and Sacramento's Peja Stojakovic each averaged 24.2 points a game during the season.

The T-wolves went 3-1 against the Kings this season and own the home-court edge in a battle of the two of the NBA's most successful homecourt clubs. Minnesota went 31-10 at home while the Kings were 34-7.

The Nets, off since sweeping New York out of the first round, seek a spot in the NBA Finals for a third consecutive year, but the Nets have not beaten Detroit since the Pistons obtained forward Rasheed Wallace.

Indiana's Jermaine O'Neal wants the Pacers to win a title for 38-year-old veteran guard Reggie Miller.


DUNCAN: Spurs' main man. AP

Song celebrates 18th b-day, stays ahead in LPGA meet

Rosales 4 shots down

STOCKBRIDGE, Georgia—Aree Song bent over to light the candles on a chocolate birthday cake sent by her agent. Before blowing them out, she paused and smiled.

"Anybody know what I'm going to wish for?" Song asked playfully. It's pretty obvious.

Song celebrated her 18th birthday by staying in the lead on Saturday at the Chick-fil-A Charity Championship. If she can hold on for another round — no guarantee against a daunting leaderboard that includes Annika Sorenstam — the teenager would become the youngest winner in LPGA history.

The $240,000 first prize would certainly stand out among the CDs, gift certificates and other birthday gifts the South Korea star has already received.

"I wouldn't mind that," Song said.

She shot a 2-under-par 70 in the third round and hopes to surpass Marlene Hagge as the youngest winner ever. The Hall of Famer was 18 years, 14 days old when she won the Sarasota Open in 1952.

History won't come easy. Sorenstam, the world's No. 1 player, is just two strokes behind. So are Grace Park, who won the first major of the year, and Se Ri Pak, the defending Chick-fil-A champion.

Also within striking distance was Jennifer Rosales of the Philippines who shot a 69 for 209, just four strokes off the lead.

Rosales, who had earlier rounds of 70-70, was in a tie with three others.

This was certainly a birthday to remember. While logging her second straight round without a bogey at Eagle's Landing Country Club in suburban Atlanta, Song wore a shirt that had "I'm 18 and Excited" emblazoned across the front. *AP*

SONG **lights the candles on her birthday cake in the media tent.** AP

Balico sparkles as Tagaytay tops team chess tilt

By Marlon Bernardino,
Contributor

PUERTO PRINCESA—Top seed Tagaytay City made it two in a row in team competitions when it overcame third seed Bulacan "A", 2.5-1.5, to clinch the title in the 2004 National Inter-Provincial Chess Team Championship Saturday at the Pavilion Hall of the provincial capitol here.

Jerome Balico was the unlikely hero for Tagaytay, providing the team's lone final-round victory with a 30-move demolition of Bulacan's board 3 player Noel Dela Cruz in a Sicilian Defense-Dragon variation.

The three other matches in the showdown ended in draws.

Board 1 gold medalist Grandmaster Joey Antonio Jr., board 2 topnotcher NM Rolly Martinez and multititled Edmundo Gatus halved the point with GM-candidate Mark Paragua, Asian zonal champion and GM-candidate Ronald Dableo and Roel Abelgas, respectively.

Antonio and Paragua called the truce after 50 moves of a Caro-Kann game, Martinez drew with Dableo in just 28 moves of a French duel while Gatus split the point with Abelgas in another Caro-Kann game after 47 moves.

In the battle for third and fourth places, defending champion Bataan Chess Team downed fifth seed Bulacan "B" (UP Dream Team), 3-1.

GM Eugene Torre, NM Rolando Nolte and Truman Hernaez scored the full point for Bataan over Bulacan's NM Erwin Carag, Jojo Aquino and board 5 gold medalist Christopher Castellano, in that order.

Leonardo Carlos, acting coach of the UP team, saved the day for Bulacan B by trouncing Rodolfo Panopio in 31 moves of a Caro-Kann Defense.

Tagaytay City, whose trip here was sponsored by Mayor Francis Tolentino, won the P100,000 cash purse while Bulacan A of Raymond Pagdanganan took home P70,000. Bataan and Bulacan B received P50,000 and P30,000, respectively, in the tournament sanctioned by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines and held in cooperation with the province of Palawan headed by Governor Joel T. Reyes.

The rest of the team scores: 4.5—Laguna (Calamba), Palawan (Philippine Navy); 4.0—Palawan A, Baguio City; 3.5—Rizal (Cainta), Misamis Oriental, Palawan B, Benguet; 2.5—Palawan C; 1.5—Palawan (Brox), Palawan D; 0—Oriental Mindoro

Board medallists—Board 1: GM Rogelio Antonio (5.5/7); Board 2: NM Rolly Martinez (5.5/7); Board 3: Tommy Escalante, Palawan C (4/5); Board 4: Roland Salvador, Palawan-Navy (6.5/7); Board 5: Christopher Castellano, Bulacan B (3/4).

Chess conflict: Who will bridge the gap?

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

(GOODBYE, Boy. My family and I extend our deepest condolences to the heirs of a dear friend, Camilo "Boy" Mendez, who died of heart attack last Saturday at the Philippine Racing Club where he served as chief steward. He will be missed).

THERE is a need for the Philippine Sportswriters Association to interpose between grandmaster Eugene Torre and three-term Fide president Florencio Campomanes in order to reconcile them because their conflict is not only leaving our chess players confused and demoralized but also leaving the National Chess Federation of the Philippines in disarray.

The PSA once interceded between the late Francisco Almeda, then the secretary general of the Philippine Amateur Cycling Association, and back-to-back Tour champion lawyer Cornelio Padilla, who represented the pros, with a view to reconciling their differences. At first, it wasn't easy patching up their problems, but the PSA ultimately succeeded in convincing the warring parties to smoke the peace pipe for the good of sports in general and cycling in particular.

If the PSA was able to patch up the bitter cycling row then, why can't it do the same in chess now?

For several months now, Philippine chess has been a house divided. There is a leadership dispute between the camps of Eugene Torre, a former president of the NCFP, NCFP secretary general Sammy Estimo and national players Mark Paragua, the Vietnam SEA Games' most bemedalled athlete; IMs Ronald Bancod and Yves Ranola on the one hand and that of Campomanes, his understudy, Castro "Toti" Abundo, GMs Joey Antonio and Bong Villamayor and IM Chito Garma on the other.

Needles to say, the dispute is prolonging the agony and indignation not only of the chess players, but also of the sporting public and the few remaining chess sponsors as well.

"The controversy has caused physical and mental setback to the players who are training in earnest for several international tournaments, including next year's SEA Games here," said a chess die-hard. "But most officials do not know the real objective of sports, which is to make the athlete, first and foremost, physically and mentally prepared at all times. This is the reason why sports does not develop in our country."

Unless an immediate solution is found, including a suggestion from NCFP director Go Teng Kok to hold a snap election before the July polls, our chess players and officials can never be united. And who will be the losers? Not Eugene Torre. Not Sammy Estimo. Not Campomanes. Not even NCFP president Mat Defensor. But it will be Philippine sports that will lose in the end.

That is why many are requesting the PSA, now headed by Jimmy Cantor of Malaya, to intervene in the bitter conflict between the two factions in Philippine chess, stressing that it could play a vital role in this common effort to promote peace and develop a sound and lasting sports program.

***

BREAKING THE SPELL. The silver-medal victories of featherweight Anthony Villanueva in Tokyo in 1946 and Mansueto "Onyok" Velasco in Atlanta in 1996 were the closest the Philippine ever got to winning that elusive Olympic gold medal. This is a pity since our neighbors like Thailand, Indonesia and Hong Kong have already won Olympic golds, while we still have to bag one since 1924 when we debuted in the modern Games in Paris.

Clearly, the last 80 years of Philippine participation in the Olympics have been a very frustrating period. But despite the frustration many are still hoping that the Philippines could finally break that spell in Athens.

It is really hard to tell which sport will deliver, but boxing—as usual—will be the biggest prospect. Three boxers have already qualified for the Athens Olympics in August, with more hoping to join the trip during the third and last qualifying tournament in Karachi, Pakistan, on May 5-13.

"We are ready and determined to make good in Athens," said boxing chief Manny Lopez. "I'm sure our boxers will do us proud," added former PSC chair and Manila Mayor Mel Lopez, who is seeking his old post against incumbent Mayor Lito Atienza in the May 10 elections.

HP CLASSIC

Ellis ahead; Mickelson 3 shots off

NEW ORLEANS—Danny Ellis finally finished the first round he started on Thursday and earned a one-shot lead after two rounds by the end of Saturday in the HP Classic.

With the sun making an appearance, Ellis played the last nine holes of the first round at 5 under for a 9-under 63, then shot a 66 for a two-day total of 129 in the $5.1 million tournament.

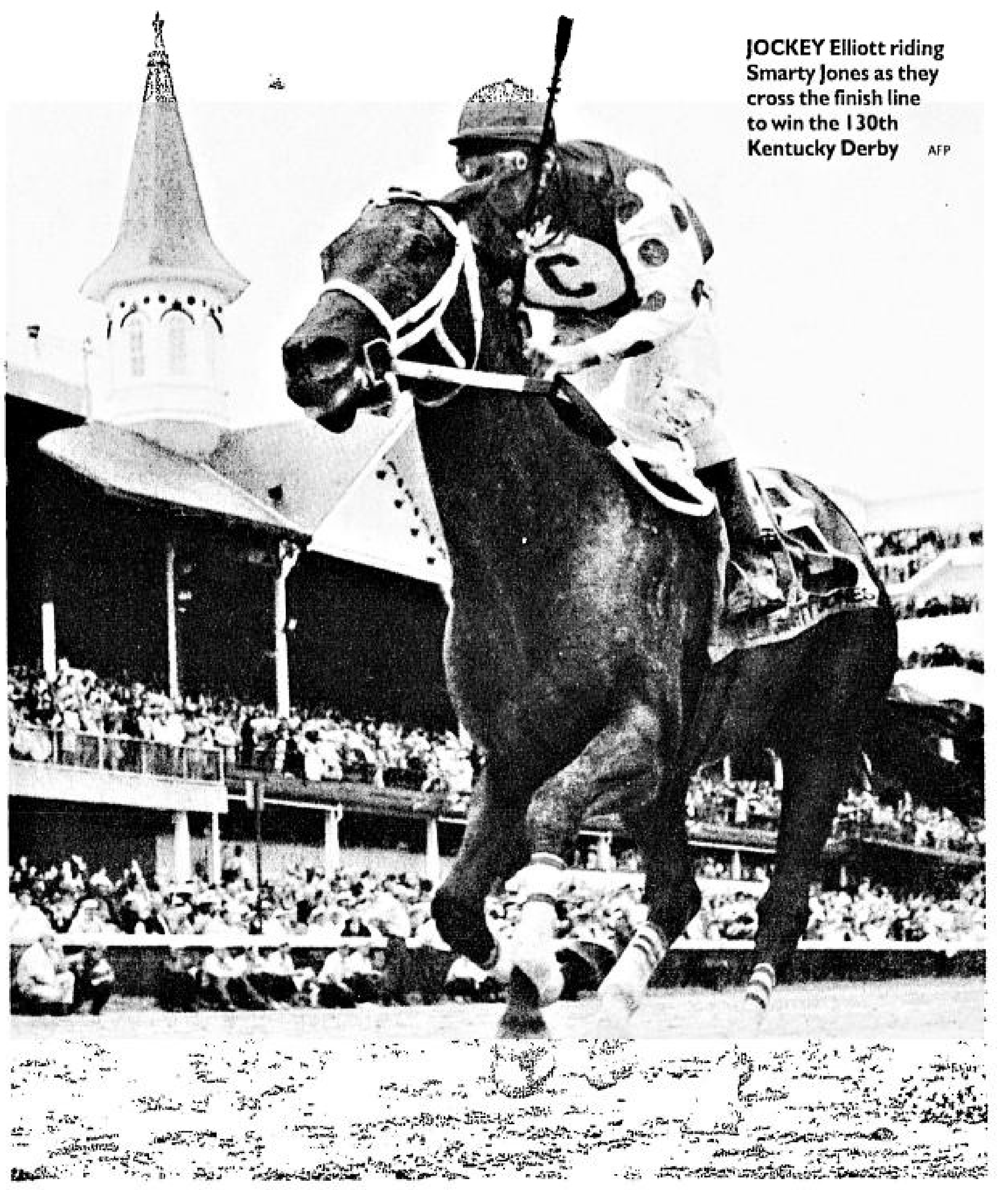
Masters champion Phil Mickelson, in his first tournament since winning the green jacket at Augusta, was three shots back.

"I just made some putts all day, and I drove it well," Ellis said about his first lead in his 61 tournaments on the PGA Tour. "And I made a nice chip-in on 18, so that was nice."

Ellis was one of the lucky players at the weather-plagued tournament—he actually completed two rounds. *AP*

Smarty Jones tops Kentucky Derby

Unbeaten chestnut colt captures $5-M bonus; Lion Heart 2nd



JOCKEY Elliott riding Smarty Jones as they cross the finish line to win the 130th Kentucky Derby AFP

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky—Smarty Jones splashed his way past Lion Heart in the stretch and won the Kentucky Derby on Saturday.

The victory triggered the biggest payoff in America's premier horse race, with the undefeated Smarty Jones earning a $5-million bonus from Oaklawn Park along with the Derby winner's share of $854,800.

Smarty Jones ran his record to 7-for-7 and became the first unbeaten Derby winner since Seattle Slew in 1977. Seattle Slew went on to win the Triple Crown, a feat Smarty Jones will attempt when he heads to the Preakness in two weeks.

Sloppy track

Even over a sloppy track at Churchill Downs—the first in 10 years—Smarty Jones raced just behind pace-setter Lion Heart. As the 18-horse field came off the final turn, the chestnut colt moved up to challenge for the lead. Under Derby rookie Stewart Elliott, Smarty Jones staged his patented stretch surge and pulled away for the win.

He won by 2 3/4 lengths over Lion Heart, ridden by Mike Smith, with Imperialism, trained by 21-year-old Kristin Mulhall, third.

The winning time for the 1 1/4-mile Derby was a slow 2:04.06 over the fourth sloppy track in Derby history.

"Man, that was great," winning trainer John Servis exclaimed after his first Derby. "That was a beautiful race. Picture perfect."

Servis and Stewart, a pair of Philadelphia Park regulars, became the first trainer-jockey duo to win the Derby on their first try since Spectacular Bid won in 1979 for trainer Bud Delp and jockey Rodney Franklin.

In the stands, 77-year-old owner Roy Chapman got out of his wheelchair and shouted, "I can't believe it!" as he received hugs from Servis, friends and relatives. Chapman, hooked up to an oxygen tank because of his emphysema, then sat back down, taking deep breaths to calm himself, but smiling the whole time.

Smarty Jones has been the Derby darling ever since he arrived in Louisville two weeks ago. And that's partly because the 3-year-old colt's biography reads like a soap-opera doozy: a Pennsylvania-bred who nearly died when he slammed his head on an iron bar; a trainer and jockey based at a small-time park; owners who refused a blank check for the horse.

Roy and Pat Chapman will now collect a $5-million bonus from Oaklawn Park in Hot Springs, Arkansas, because their horse swept the Rebel Stakes, Arkansas Derby and Kentucky Derby. With the huge payday, Smarty Jones becomes the sixth biggest winner in racing history with earnings of $6,733,155.

The 4-1 favorite paid $10.20, $6.20 and $4.80. Lion Heart paid $8.20 and $5.80. Imperialism returned $6.20 to show. Limehouse was fourth, followed by The Cliff's Edge, Action This Day, Read the Footnotes, Birdstone, Tapit, Borrego, Song of the Sword, Master David, Pro Prado, Castledale, Friends Lake, Minister Eric and Pollard's Vision. Quintons Gold Rush did not finish.

New York-bred

Last year, Funny Cide became the first New York-bred to win the Derby. Smarty Jones becomes just the second Pennsylvania-bred—Lil E. Tee in 1992 was the first. Funny Cide also had a first-time Derby trainer and owners, but any other similarities end there.

Indeed, any horse would be hard-pressed to come up with a made-for-TV story to match Smarty's. And it all started just months after he was born at the Chapmans' Someday Farm in Chester County, Pennsylvania, the lush countryside outside Philadelphia. *AP*

SMARTY Jones trainer John Servis (left), owner Pat Chapman (second from left), owner Roy Chapman, and jockey Elliott (right) show off the Kentucky Derby trophy to the crowd at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky. The unbeaten Smarty Jones won the prestigious race with a time of 2:04. REUTER

Chapmans' win one for the ages

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky—Roy and Pat Chapman always wanted to win big races, so they named their stable Someday Farm.

That day arrived on a rainy Saturday at Churchill Downs when their undersized colt, Smarty Jones, ran through the mud for a 2 3/4-length victory in the Kentucky Derby.

"We never raced at this level, never thought we'd be here until we met Smarty," Chapman said.

That happened on Feb. 28, 2001, the day the chestnut colt was born at Someday Farm in Chester County, Pennsylvania. He was named Smarty Jones after Pat Chapman's mother, Mildred Jones, who was nicknamed Smarty by her grandparents and was also born on a Feb. 28.

But tragedy struck that December. Their trainer, Bobby Camac, and his wife were shot to death, and Camac's stepson was charged with double murder.

Camac had sued the stepson, Wade Russell, over allegations that Russell defrauded him of about $70,000 in a check-forgery scheme. No trial has been scheduled.

Distraught and concerned about Roy Chapman's deteriorating health, the couple disbanded their breeding operation after the slayings and sold all their horses except two: a 2-year-old and Smarty Jones.

At the time, the Chapmans had offers to sell Smarty Jones. But Pat, who buys horses based on the look in their eyes, told her husband, "Let's keep him."

"We just liked him," said 77-year-old Roy Chapman, who struggles for breath because of emphysema. "To see a horse that was born on the farm that we had and look at the stall he was born in, I'm still a little nervous."

In 2003, Smarty Jones was sent to small-time Philadelphia Park, where John Servis took over his training. Servis had been well-regarded by Camac.

"Without John Servis and Smarty's talents, we would not be here," Roy Chapman said.

He requires oxygen and uses a wheelchair to get around, although he stood up for a better view when the Derby began.

What a beautiful view it was. Smarty Jones stalked pacesetter Lion Heart for much of the 1 1/4 miles, then pounced on him turning for home.

The Chapmans have been in the sport since the 1980s, but the big-time tracks and major money races always eluded them.

"I'm kind of numb," Pat Chapman said. "It's been an incredible journey."

Until Smarty Jones came along, the Chapmans' biggest boast in racing was I'll Get Along, who won 12 races and nearly $280,000 in her career. Perhaps her greatest gift was being the dam of Smarty Jones. I'll Get Along was later sold for $130,000. *AP*

Deportivo deals severe blow on Real Madrid

MADRID, Spain—Deportivo de La Coruna downed Real Madrid, 2-0, and inflicted a severe blow on the defending champion's Spanish league title hopes on Saturday.

Zinedine Zidane was ejected before the interval as Madrid stayed in second place and in serious danger of ending the season without a trophy.

League front-runner Valencia will take a four-point lead if it beats Real Betis at home on Sunday and, with only three more rounds remaining, would be a clear favorite to win the title for the second time in three seasons.

Striker Diego Tristan and left back Joan Capdevila netted in each half for Deportivo, which extended its excellent home record over Madrid.

Despite Deportivo fielding an under-strength team to save its first-choice players for the second leg of its Champions League semifinal with FC Porto on Tuesday, Madrid couldn't end its 12-year stretch without a win at the Riazor Stadium.

Valencia has 71 points from 34 games, while Madrid, which has lost three of its last four matches, has 70 from 35. FC Barcelona, which hosts Espanyol on Sunday, has 66 points, one more than Deportivo.

In Saturday's other match, Atletico de Madrid downed lowly Celta de Vigo, 3-2, and moved into sixth place.

Deportivo's modified team struggled at first against a forceful Madrid with Argentine midfielder Esteban Cambiasso hitting the post with a sixth-minute volley from Luis Figo's cross from the right.

David Beckham, who clashed with Deportivo's Lionel Scaloni in the teams' match at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in December, received a kick from the Argentine midfielder which went unseen by the referee in the 34th. *AP*

BECKHAM (right) tackles Deportivo La Coruna's Djalminha. AP

Adu makes 1st pro start

SAN JOSE, California—Football prodigy Freddy Adu made his first professional start for DC United, who rallied for a 1-1 draw with the San Jose Earthquakes in Major League Soccer on Saturday.

A 14-year-old phenom who bypassed offers from European powerhouses to stay close to his family in Washington, Adu had come off the bench in his first four MLS games.

He was off target with one scoring attempt before he was replaced by Alecko Eskandarian in the 80th minute.

Adu, who made his professional debut as a substitute in United's 3-2 season-opening victory against San Jose in Washington, had replaced Eskandarian in the starting lineup.

Dema Kovalenko, making his first start of the season for DC United, came through in the 66th minute, collecting a cross from Bobby Convey at the far goalpost before settling the ball and slotting it past goalkeeper Pat Onstad. *AFP*

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1ST QUARTER OUTPUT

Local racing sales hit record ₱2.1B

LOCAL horseracing sales in the first quarter of 2004 hit a record P2.1 billion, Philippine Racing Commission chair Jimmy Dilag announced yesterday.

"This is very good for the industry. With this trend, we hope to achieve another record-breaking year," said Dilag, adding the total output was a remarkable 17-percent increase from last year's earnings of P1.8 billion for the period.

Dilag added that the P20-million additional Philracom budget which President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo approved last year enabled the racing body to implement its various projects.

"We are very grateful to President Arroyo for throwing her full support to the racing industry," added Dilag.

The impressive sales performance, Dilag said, was also attributed to the utmost cooperation of the two racing clubs (Philippine Racing Club and Manila Jockey Club), the horseracing groups (Marho, Philtobo and Klub Don Juan de Manila), trainers' group and the continuous patronage of the betting public.

Dilag added that the P2.1-billion sales posted a total of P322 million in revenues to the government.

This year's first quarter earnings totaled P2,147,844,137 compared with the P1,847,937,617 posted in 2003 or an increase of P299,906,820.

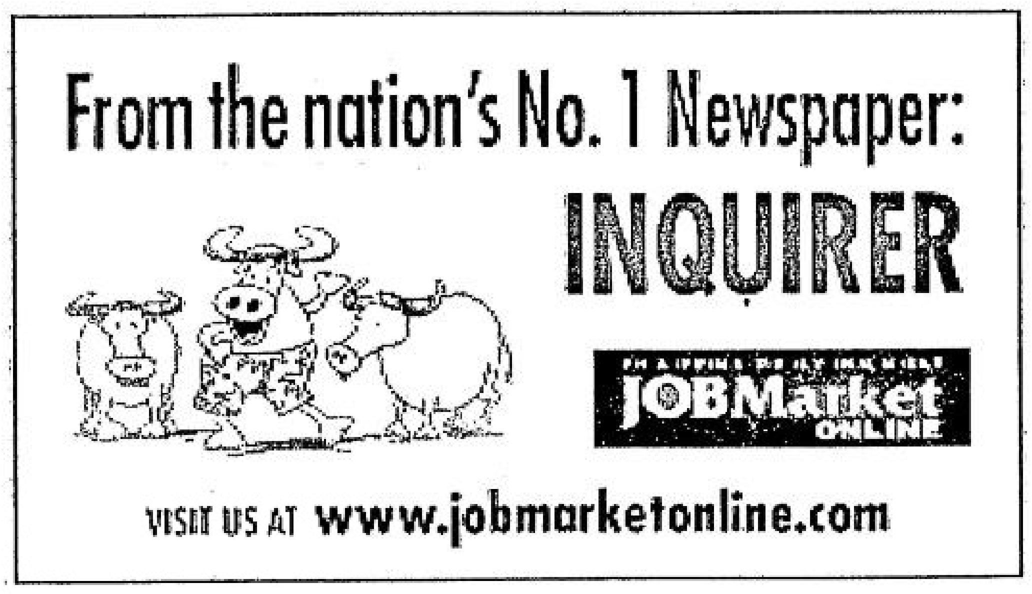
"Local racing really experienced a boom with the help of President Arroyo," Dilag stressed.

The Philracom chief said that he and commissioners Eddie Jose, Vey Cruz, Bobok Domingo Jr. and Roger Tandiama are committed to work hand in hand with the various sectors of the industry in giving the betting public more stakes/special races the rest of the year.

"Racing fans can expect bigger, better and more stakes races this coming months," said Dilag, a former pelotari and horseowner himself.

MS MACAPAGAL

DILAG



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'Absolute' tops Labor Day race

By Edwin Villanueva

ABSOLUTE Charmer unleashed his customary late rush to win the Labor Day Cup race yesterday at the Santa Ana Park.

Sent off as top favorite at the last minute, Absolute Charmer came charging back from sixth and last spot then used an opening along the rail in the drive for home to post a two-length victory in the 1,600-meter contest.

"*Talagang maaasahan pag galing ito sa likuran* (She's really dependable especially when she comes from behind)," said star jockey Fernando Raquel Jr.

The win came a day before Raquel starts serving his 52-racing day suspension. He was penalized for "deliberately losing the race" aboard Up Rising last Thursday night.

Absolute Charmer, a four-year-old chestnut filly owned by Philtobo director Edd Gonzalez and trained by former jockey Rizalito Agustin, captured the P240,000 top prize put up by the Philippine Racing Commission and the Philippine Racing Club.

Wonderful ride

``I'd like to commend Raquel for that wonderful ride. Entong Agustin also did a good job preparing the horse for this race," said Gonzalez.

Sired by Entrepreneur out of Banter, Absolute Charmer clocked 1:41.6.

Coming in second was Dandansoy (JB Hernandez), while Neat Laurel (JB Cordero) nipped Material Maker (Pat Dilema) to place third.

Dandansoy caught Material Maker and Neat Laurel at the top of the stretch but Absolute Charmer, under heavy punishment from Raquel, dug in like a house on fire to snatch the victory watched by a huge Sunday crowd.

Gonzalez received the winner's trophy from executive director/commissioner Eddie Jose, who represented Philracom chief Jimmy Dilag at the awarding rites.

Blue battles Red in PDI cage final

BLUE nosed out White, 67-66, Saturday to arrange a title showdown with Red in the 2004 Philippine Daily Inquirer intercolor basketball tournament at the Olympia Sports Complex in Makati.

Jim Punzalan, Erik Arazas, Arnold Buño and Rolly Abad starred as Blue repeated over White to enter the do-or-die final slated on May 8. Gametime is 10:30 a.m.

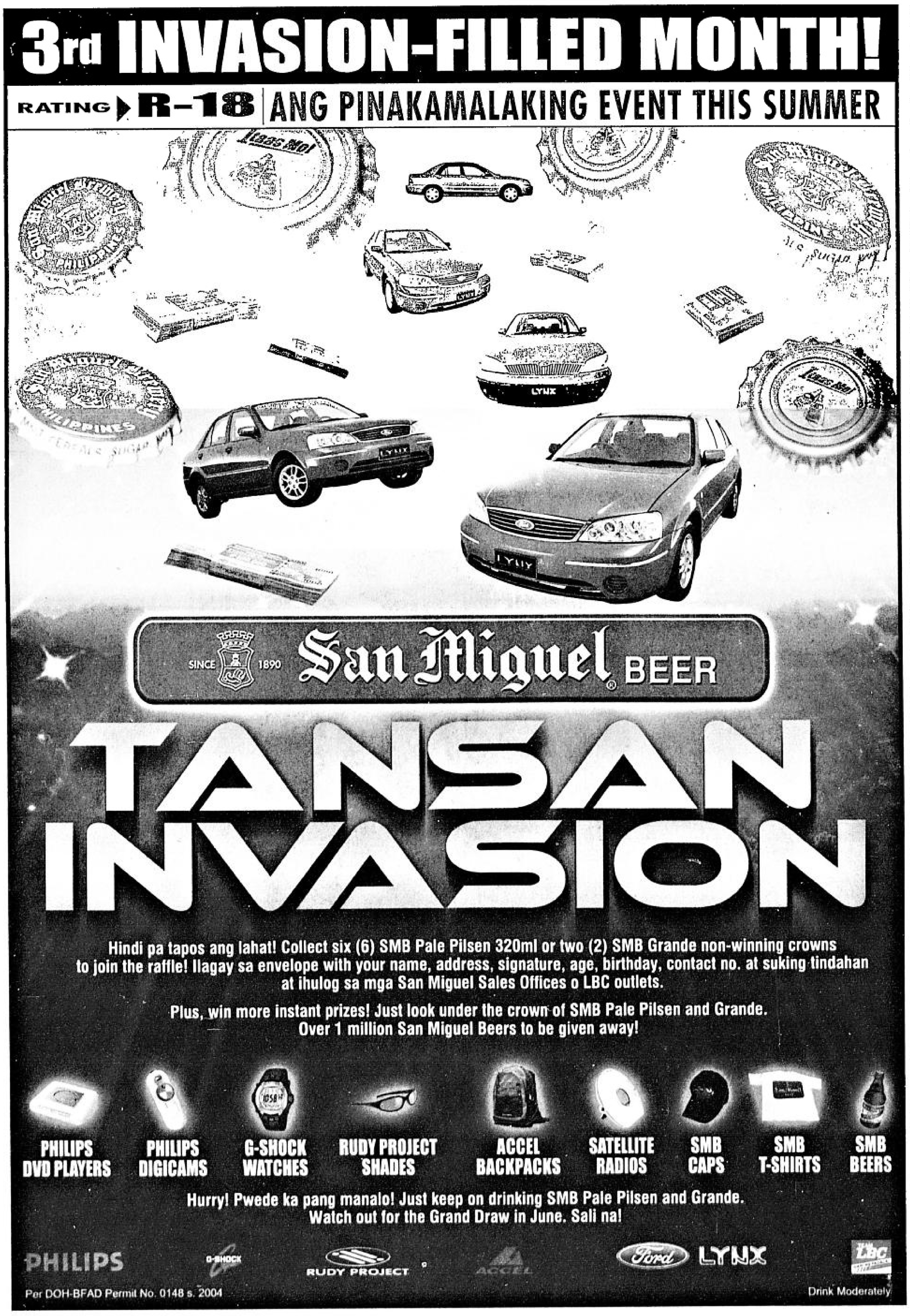
Buño scored a crucial three-pointer in the homestretch as Blue, which missed the services of power forward Edwin Villanueva and playmaker Dennis Eroa, kept its poise in the homestretch.

White and Yellow will fight it out for third place in the first game at 9 a.m.

Scores:

BLUE 67—Punzalan 20, Arazas 19, Buno 13, Abad 9, Delluta 2, Labay 2, Ambrosio 2.

WHITE 66—Rago 22, Lagman 18, Espinosa 9, Fua 7, Cucio 5, Rubio 3, Navarro 2, Rodriguez 0.



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RP seen facing high risk of crisis

By Doris C. Dumlao

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If the 10 variables total 75 points or more, Damocles warns that a country's balance of payments position is vulnerable to crisis while a reading above 100 signals that a crisis could erupt any time.

The Philippines' score stood at 50 based on the Damocles update, the same as its risk weighting in December and still below the threshold set by Lehman Brothers by which red flags must be raised.

However, the report said the Philippines' score was likely to deteriorate over a one-year period. It was also much higher than the average score of 17 among emerging markets in Asia, which, on the overall, was considered by the Damocles index as the least vulnerable part of the world's emerging markets.

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Singapore's index rating was held steady at 10, reaffirming its low level of crisis risk, with an outlook that the score will improve over a year's time—despite risks of contagion from the Philippines and Indonesia which may arise from their respective presidential elections.

Thailand obtained the best score of zero, which Lehman expected to remain stable over a year.

Malaysia was given a score of 10, likewise with an outlook that the same rating would remain over one year.

The only monitored Asian country aside from the Philippines whose score was seen likely to deteriorate in a year was Taiwan, but it had a much better rating of 24. Among the concerns cited in Taiwan were domestic politics as well as the fragile relations with mainland China.

"Investors should not treat the region as a homogenous entity," cautioned Rob Subbaraman, Lehman Brothers' senior economist for Asia. "There are pockets of risk, most notably in the Philippines," he said.

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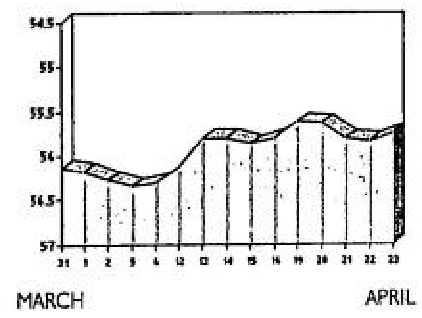
RP SEEN/ B7

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 56.07 = $1
As of 5 p.m., April 30, 2004

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GOLD: $383.60-384.10
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April 30, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.844666	1.000000	55.6950
Japan	Yen	0.007670	0.009081	0.5058
United Kingdom	Pound	1.495988	1.771100	98.6414
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.108299	0.128215	7.1409
Switzerland	Franc	0.646115	0.764935	42.6031
Canada	Dollar	0.614213	0.727167	40.4996
Singapore	Dollar	0.497213	0.588651	32.7849
Australia	Dollar	0.611191	0.723589	40.3003
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.240612	2.652661	147.7400
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.225239	0.266660	14.8516
Brunei	Dollar	0.495754	0.586923	32.6887
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000098	0.000116	0.0065
Thailand	Baht	0.021239	0.025145	1.4005
UAE	Dirham	0.229972	0.272264	15.1637
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.183900	65.9373
Argentina	Peso	0.296895	0.351494	19.5765
Brazil	Real	0.288282	0.341297	19.0085
Denmark	Kroner	0.134386	0.159099	8.8610
India	Rupee	0.019149	0.022671	1.2627
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.222310	0.263193	14.6585
Mexico	New Peso	0.074223	0.087873	4.8941
New Zealand	Dollar	0.525126	0.621697	34.6254
Norway	Kroner	0.122254	0.144737	8.0611
Korea	Won	0.000731	0.000865	0.0482
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025650	0.030367	1.6913

STOCK MARKET

Weak trading seen

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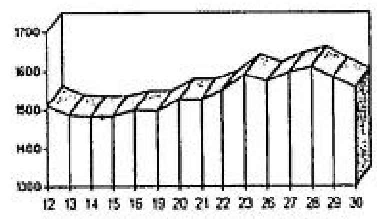
The main composite index fell 34 points last week or 2.2 percent to 1,555.01 after zooming to a three-year high early in the week.



(See stock market report on Page B6)

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FIRST 4 MONTHS

Customs exceeds collection target

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The BOC collection last month brought its cumulative revenue generation for the first four months of the year to P39.76 billion, surpassing by 17.6 percent its four-month target of P33.81 billion.

The January-to-April collection this year was also 11.9 percent higher than the P35.53 billion collected during the first four months of 2003.

"With the trend set in the first four months of the year, the BOC is well on track to meet its collection target for the year," said Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo.

For this year, the BOC is tasked to collect P112 billion. The figure was increased from the original target of P105 billion.

The Department of Finance, the head agency of the BOC, said the increase in the BOC's collection target was attributed to its encouraging performance early in the year. The DOF said a P112-billion target was appropriate for the BOC, which has been exceeding its collection goals since last year.

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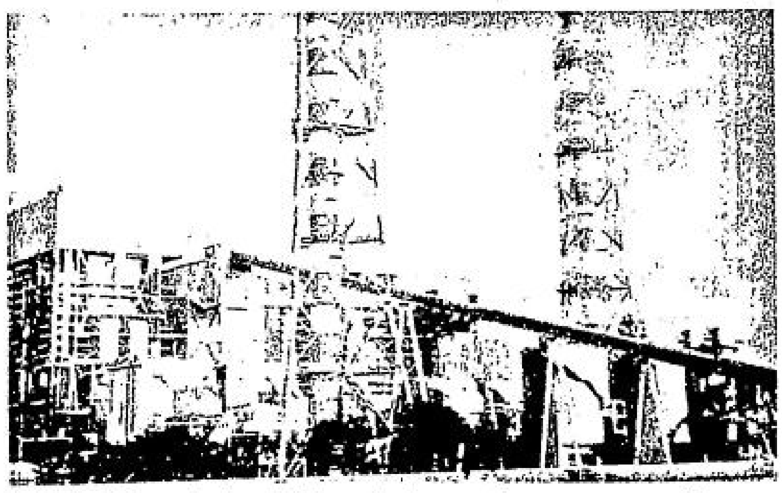
The 2004 deficit is expected to be cut slightly to 197.8 billion from last year's 199.9 billion.



LOOMING supply shortfall boosting interest in power generation.

Metrobank group eyes more power facilities

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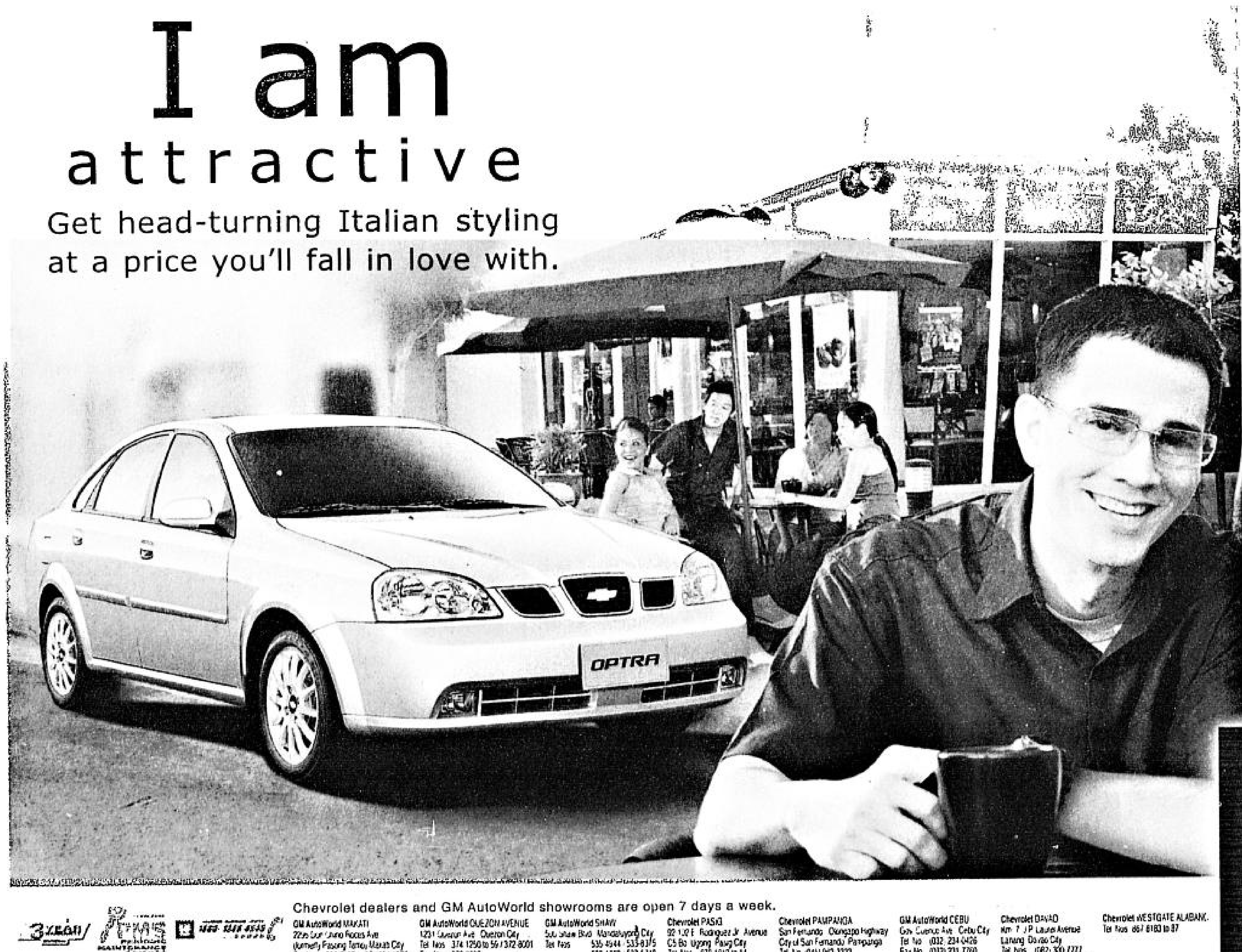
METROBANK/ B6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RP SEEN B7

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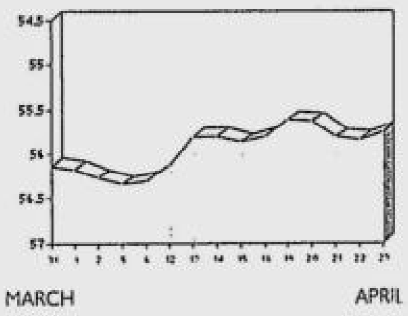

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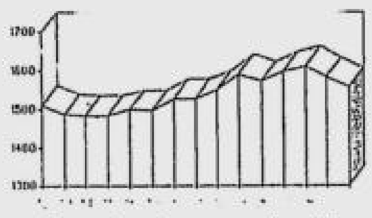

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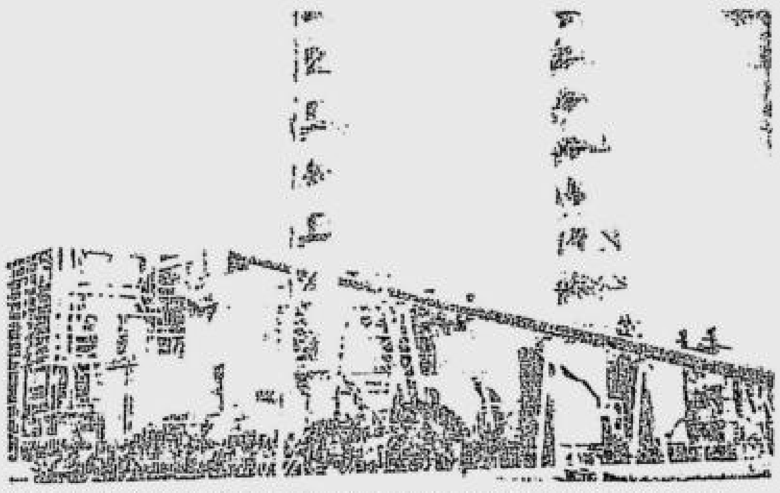

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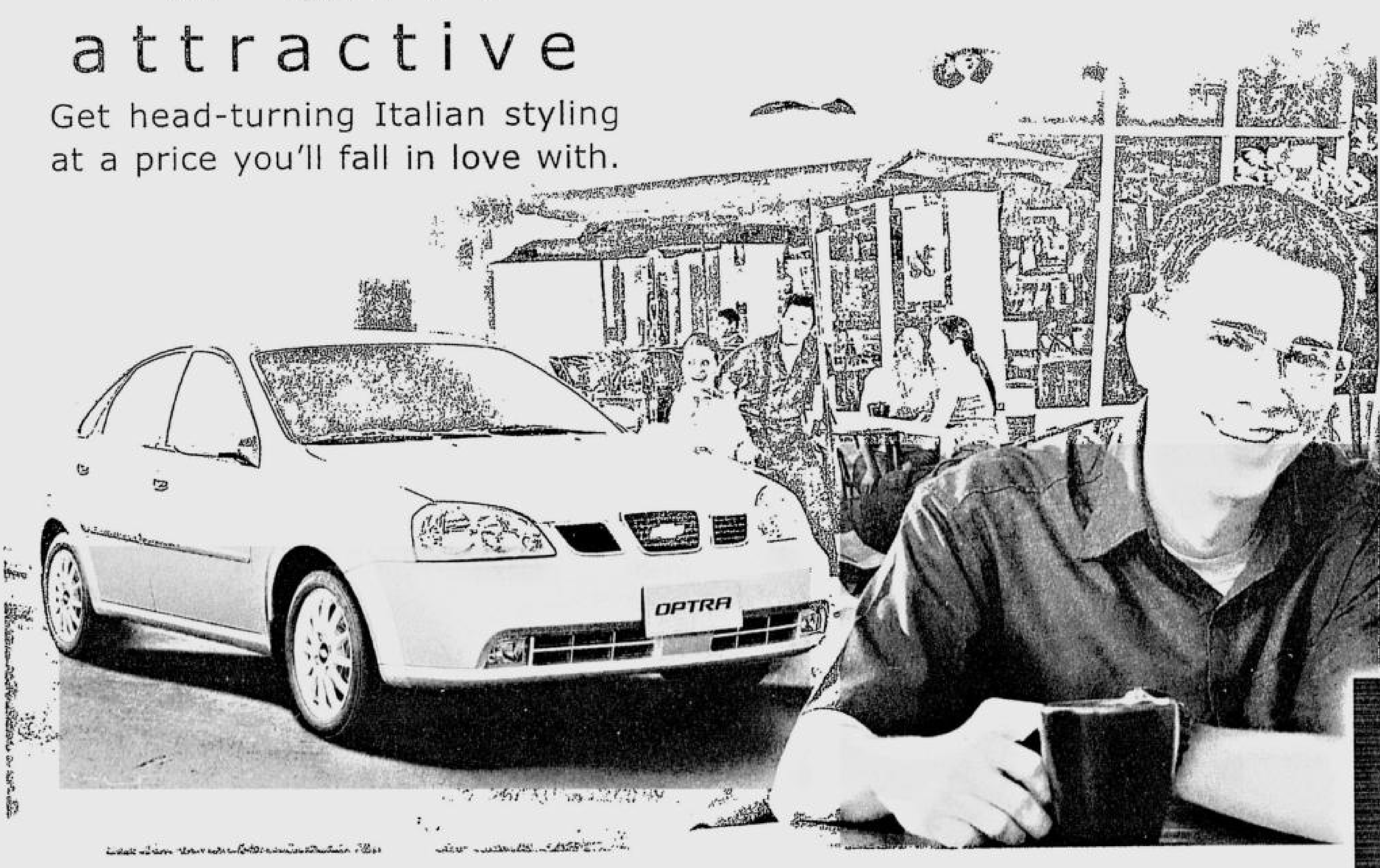
METROBANK B4



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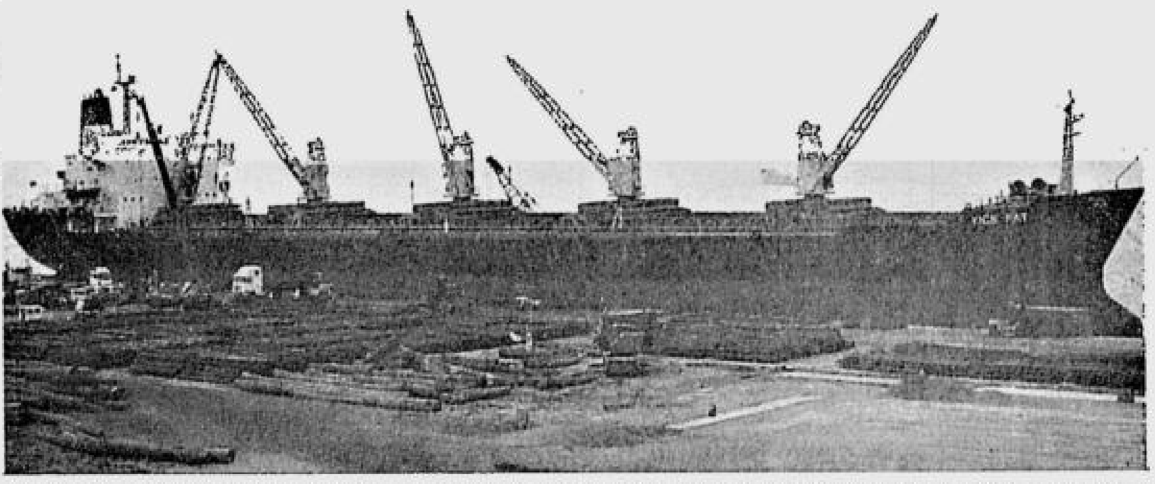
Harbour Centre delivers fastest turnaround for steel shipment

The country's most modern port terminal conducts biggest pierside operations, with almost 40,000 metric tons of steel billets discharged in record time



Fastest vessel turnaround: Harbour Centre Port recently discharged 39,940 metric tons of steel shipment in record time of five days. The vessel's 11.3 meter draft was easily accommodated bythe port's deep berthing drafts.

Fulfilling its promise of providing world-class port terminal services, Harbour Centre recently delivered the fastest vessel turnaround in what could be regarded as the biggest pierside operations in recent years in the country.

The operation began last month when M/V Yick Fat, a 42-ton cargo vessel from Russia carrying 39,940 metric tons of steel billets docked at Harbour Centre. Consignees for the shipment are Continental Steel, Allied Steel, Universal Steel and Cathay Steel, among others.

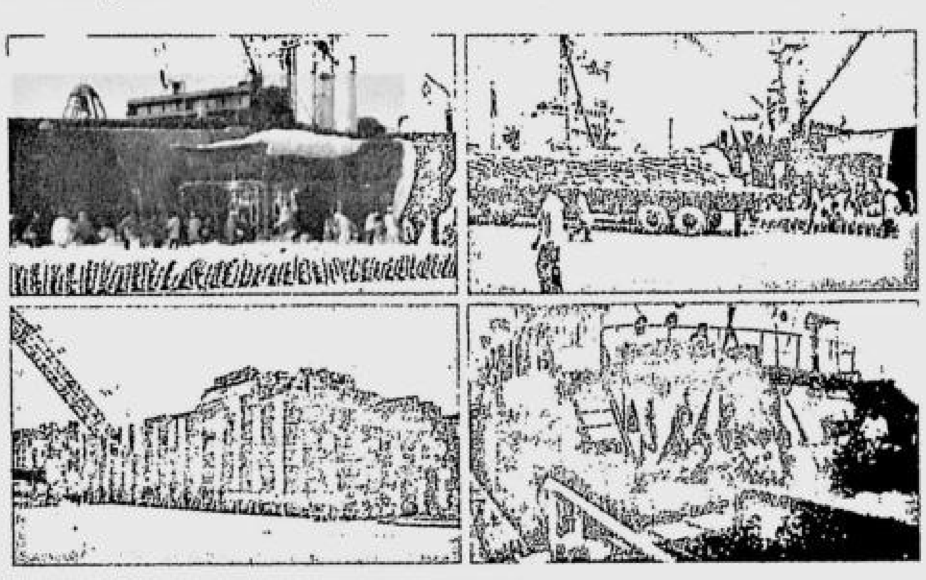
The entire operation was hailed as a record accomplishment in local shipping standards, with the massive steel shipment unloaded and discharged -- quickly and efficiently with zero pilferage -- in five working days!

The turnaround is almost 20% more efficient than normal timetable, explained Michael Romero, CEO of Harbour Centre Port, adding that, aside from the port's world-class facilities, the higher level of efficiency can also be attributed to the pre-operations meeting they hold with clients. "We carefully plan every operation because we believe this is key to higher level of productivity. This way, we are able to correct inappropriate unloading procedures even before actual operations begin, allowing us to accomplish things much faster and provide bigger savings to our clients."

These, Romero said, are the reasons why almost 80% of foreign non-containerized cargoes entering Manila and the Philippines are now docking at Harbour Centre Port which is located within a cove that provides a natural barrier against bad weather.

"We have been receiving very encouraging responses from our clients," he said, referring to the port's growing number of clients. "The feedback has been very positive. I believe the reason for this is the better value that we provide to them. . They enjoy as much as 50% savings from the fast vessel turnaround, professional service and zero pilferage on their cargoes."

These cargoes include steel, logs, lumber, rice, fertilizer, gypsum, silica, frozen fishes, wheat, grains, sugar, soya, livestock (cattle), iron ore, among others.



A growing number of companies that bring in (clockwise) fertilizer, rice, logs and frozen fish shipments to Manila now prefer working with Harbour Centre because of the port's superior efficiency and cost-effective services

The impressive turnaround is made possible by Harbour Centre's superior port facilities and amenities. The port boasts of a world-class working apron measuring 865 meters in length by 45 meters in width, providing ample space for unhampered and efficient unloading operations. Efficient arrastre and stevedoring services are also available.

Harbour Centre also boasts of an expansive, 15-hectare back up area where cargoes up to 6 TEUs 'high can be properly stacked, ensuring against misplaced or lost cargoes. The port also has a truck holding area that can fit in 500 trucks at a time.

Unloading and dispatch of cargoes are supervised by the Harbour Centre's experienced personnel trained in providing honest and straightforward services. No red tape and corruption guaranteed!

Furthermore, the port boasts of tight security system that guarantees zero pilferage for steel shipments. Vehicles entering and leaving the port are carefully monitored. Security personnel are strategically positioned all over the port facilities to guard against theft, pilferage and other suspicious activities.

Complementing its superior facilities are ample port equipment, including an 80-ton heavy-lift capacity Gottwald Harbour Mobile Crane, as well as 15, 12, 10, 8, 5 and 3-ton forklifts, among other equipment. At present, Harbour Centre has a total of 25 fully-owned forklifts with capacities ranging from 3 to 15 tons.

Customers also enjoy additional savings through a rebate program based on the frequency and volume of their shipment.

"We see ourselves as partners of our clients, helping them achieve a higher level of efficiency and savings. And we hope to be able to do this for other companies in various industries as well," adds Romero.

HARBOUR CENTRE'S UNIQUE ADVANTAGES

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- Working Apron: 1) North Port 30 meters wide by 865 lineal meter-long and;
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Taipannic talks

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

THE CAMPS of taipans Henry Sy Sr. and Alfonso Yuchengco are holding very hush-hush talks that could end up with Sy eventually acquiring majority control of China Banking Corp.

According to the grapevine, former Bangko Sentral Governor Gabriel C. Singson provided the backroom channeling that led the two taipans and their respective representatives to sit down and negotiate amid Sy's gradual but determined move to enlarge his current 42-percent control of Chinabank.

Singson, who was in Singapore when reached Friday, merely laughed when asked if indeed it was true he had brokered the talks.

"I am close to both taipans," he said, declining to elaborate. Singson also chairs Yuchengco's Great Pacific Life Assurance Corp.

The talks apparently included even the suit filed by Yuchengco over the sale to unknown parties of the 8-percent stake of International Commercial Bank of China in Chinabank.

That sale had been facilitated by Lucky Securities, controlled by stockbroker Eddie Gobing, a known Sy ally.

According to the grapevine, the interpleader suit filed by Yuchengco in the Makati Regional Trial Court is, in legal argot, "not moving," meaning both parties are not pressing to have the case proceed to trial.

And, in addition, the two taipans seem to be back in friendly terms, greeting and exchanging small talks during social gatherings, according to an eyewitness.

Chinabank is scheduled to hold its shareholders' meeting on Thursday. Hans Sy, the taipan's eldest son who chairs the bank's executive committee, and Henry Jr. told a journalist at the sidelines of the SM Development Corp. shareholders' meeting the other week that the status quo would prevail.

The Sys have four seats, represented by all four male siblings, in the Chinabank board.

"But better check with Ate," said Hans, referring to Teresita Sy, the taipan's eldest child who is chair of the family's Banco de Oro.

Teresita, however, declined comment.

On the other hand, Yuchengco's heiress-apparent, Helen, who is married to Chinabank president/CEO, Peter Dee, was in Vancouver last week, and could not be reached.

The Yuchengcos and the Dees own about 20 percent of the bank, which was founded in 1920 by the late Dee patriarch along with a sprinkling of Chinoy, Filipino, Spanish and American partners.

Despite being the largest shareholder, the Sys had been content in allowing the Dee-led management to run the bank.

Boracay+Biltmore

IN ADDITION to the four-story Salcedo Village building of its thrift bank subsidiary, Cocobank is also selling a two-hectare beachfront property on Boracay island, as well as a number of units in Biltmore, the Legaspi Village condominium developed by the family of wine dealer Alex Lichaytoo.

The Boracay property, for which Cocobank has set a minimum floor price of P20.8 million, had been foreclosed from Primetown Properties. It remains undeveloped and, at the last check, squatter-free.

Biltmore, on the other hand, sits on a less busy section of Legaspi Village, behind the Asian Institute of Management.

Cocobank is offering the Biltmore units, between P60,800 and P64,300 per square meter, at 10 percent down, 10 years to pay, 11-percent interest plan.

Heard through the grapevine

ENDIKA Aboitiz denies our Friday item that he owns an XJ8. Our apologies. Aboitiz actually toots around town in a 2004 model XJR, the sports and more expensive version.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

ADB guarantee eyed for $1-B Napocor loan

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT may consider tapping the Asian Development Bank to provide a credit guarantee for National Power Corp., which needs $1 billion more to complete its borrowing requirements for the year.

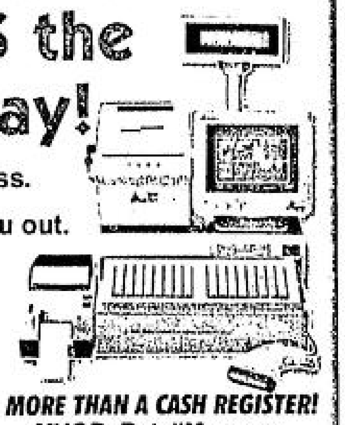
According to an official of the Department of Finance, it would be favorable for the government to have the ADB guaranteeing Napocor's loan because the multilateral agency could help borrow at a cheaper cost.

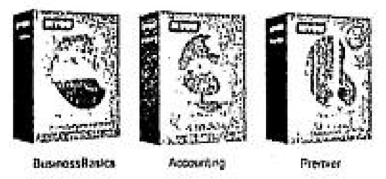
"That (guarantee from ADB) will be very helpful because ADB is a triple-A institution, and so this will raise the level of confidence among investors from whom we will source the money," the finance official said.

The statement came after the ADB has expressed its desire to help the government and Napocor raise the remaining $1 billion, which the power utility still needed to cover all its financing needs for this year. The bulk of its expenditure requirement was to pay electricity sourced from independent power producers.

The ADB said it was interested in granting another credit guarantee for Napocor.

In its previous three-year development program for the country's power sector, which ended last year, the ADB gave a credit guarantee of $500 million for Napocor.





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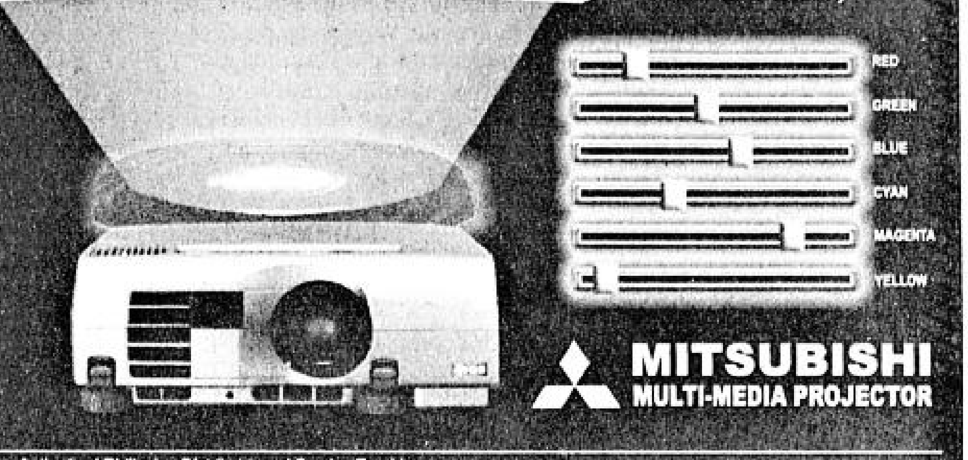

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Security Bank launches SB Dollar Fund

SECURITY Bank is launching another dollar fund following the success of its tier-2 notes offering earlier this year, Security Bank president and CEO Alberto S. Villarosa said.

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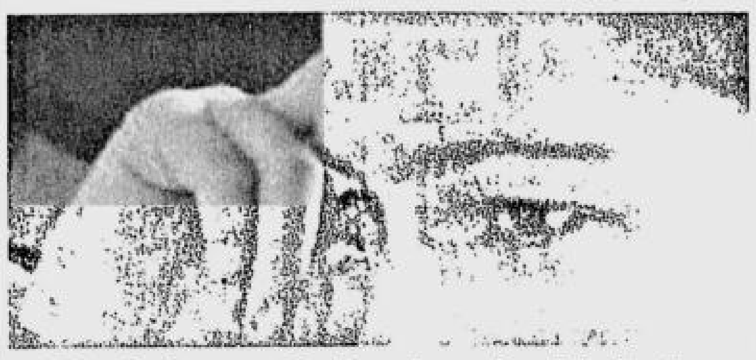

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Multiple dividends

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

ONE OF the little-known but helpful programs of the government that has been around for many years is the local volunteer program. The program is administered by the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA), an attached agency of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda). This is the government agency that coordinates the various foreign volunteer programs operating within the country, including the US Peace Corps volunteers, Japanese and Korean volunteers, and those from several other countries and agencies like the United Nations. Being part of the overall package of official development assistance (ODA) extended by our foreign donors, the task falls on Neda to coordinate the deployment of these foreign volunteers to achieve maximum benefits for the country. At the same time, it takes responsibility for ensuring the safety of the volunteers and making their experience in the country a personally and professionally rewarding one.

VIDAs and BBs

What many do not know is that we also have a small program for Filipino volunteers deployed in various places in the countryside, working in communities and institutions engaged in various aspects of development work. These volunteers are usually fresh college graduates who sign up for the Volunteers for Information and Development Assistance (VIDA) or the more recent program called Bayanihang Barangay. Volunteers receive a modest P2,000 monthly allowance from the government, while the host organization is expected to provide a counterpart allowance to ensure adequate support for the volunteer's essential expenditures.

VIDA and BB volunteers can work with schools, especially those that are rural-based, health centers, local government units, grassroots service NGOs, farm cooperatives, and many other countryside institutions that could use some help from a college graduate to fill in gaps within their own staffing. The beauty of the program is that it provides a way for society to harness the energies of otherwise unemployed youth, and provide them a way to be of service to fellow Filipinos while giving them valuable field experience that then enhances their employability later on.

Apart from gaining field experience, the participating youth volunteers gain an enriched appreciation of working at the grassroots level and solving problems where they are. Like the foreign volunteers who sign up for deployment in overseas developing countries, local volunteers who are deployed away from their home localities gain a widened awareness and perspective on the country's development challenges. Thus, such volunteer programs provide two-way benefits between the volunteer and the host institution or community availing of his/her services.

Better citizenship

For all its virtues, the local volunteer program is a very limited one, with only tens of volunteers supported by a very modest budget in any given year. The PNVSCA-managed program is admittedly not the only one of its kind. The University of the Philippines has its Pahinungod program, which harnesses the energies of volunteer UP students to the service of depressed communities, but mainly as a part-time, extracurricular activity. Ateneo has similar programs to put student volunteers' spare time in the service of the poor. This is also probably true with many other colleges and universities.

In a country where among our foremost challenges are high unemployment and low productivity, a nationwide volunteer program can be an important instrument for addressing these problems and more, all at the same time. It is a program that gives multiple dividends.

Through this same mechanism that promotes volunteerism, fresh college graduates unable to find work immediately have an option for spending their time and energies productively and meaningfully—rather than add to the statistics of the unemployed. They also become better citizens in the process of preparing them for their longer term careers, which has been one of the recognized virtues of the alumni of the US Peace Corps Volunteers program, for example.

Meaningful retirement

But there's another important segment of the population for whom a nationwide development volunteer system can be a God-send, and these are the retirees and senior citizens. There are countless members of our population from all walks of life who remain healthy and productive even way past retirement, and who would prefer to keep meaningfully busy rather than accelerate their aging through idleness. In the US and other affluent societies we see them doing volunteer work in public libraries, community centers and other places where they can continue contributing their skills, knowledge and talents for the good of the community. There is no reason why we cannot put together an organized program for harnessing volunteerism among Filipino senior citizens—and actually doing them a favor even as society benefits from their help. And I suspect we will be indirectly improving the health of our senior citizens, for whom fulfillment and a feeling of being useful can be far more effective than drugs.

Upscaling and expanding

It makes a great deal of sense, then, to channel significant public resources to upscaling and expanding the current local volunteer program into a National Development Volunteer System, with ample funds to support thousands of volunteers who only need minimal allowances all over the country. One Presidential candidate—Bro. Eddie Villanueva—has already made it part of his platform to embark on this, and the others would do well to consider it too. The local governments could either have their own parallel counterpart programs as well, or the national system could be so designed as to have them become its primary implementors. In any case, we would be raising national productivity, lowering unemployment, molding better citizens out of our youth, keeping our senior citizens healthier and happier and addressing various development needs of our communities—and achieve all this with one cost-effective national program. Certainly a good way to spend our tax pesos.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

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Photo shows Hector O. Jagaysay, Filway Marketing Inc. President holding Asia Cup with (l to r) TLA Director for Sales Mush Panjwani, TLA Managing Director Trevor Lunn and Marketing Director Shirley Tung.

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PLDT's regional expansion plan still exploratory

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. said it has been exploring possible ventures for a regional expansion but likely through parent firm First Pacific Co. Ltd.

In the last two months, PLDT or wireless subsidiary Smart Communications Inc. had been the subject of news articles about planned investments in Indonesia and Thailand.

"These are just exploratory. But I am not involved in these things," said Napoleon Nazareno, president of PLDT and Smart.

Last month, PLDT chair and First Pacific managing director Manuel Pangilinan was seen in Bangkok reportedly for business meetings.

The executive was said to be in Bangkok to explore the possibility of First Pacific, through PLDT, acquiring a minority stake in TA Orange, Thailand's third biggest cellular phone company.

Orange of France is left with a 10-percent stake in Bangkok Inter Teletech Co. Ltd. or Bitco, which owns 99.86 percent of TA Orange Co. Ltd.

Orange, one of the largest mobile phone companies in the world, sold a 39-percent interest in Bitco to its Thai partner, Charoen Pokphand/Telecom Asia. Orange had poured $550 million in the mobile phone company since it was put up three years ago.

In March, the local telecom units of First Pacific were reported to be interested in acquiring a controlling stake in an Indonesian operator.

Nazareno said that these exploratory ventures were in line with the plan of parent firm First Pacific to fortify its Asian investments.

"There are many things we are looking into including a regional expansion. But it is purely exploratory at this stage," Nazareno said earlier.

The Smart executive said the exploratory talks were "emanating" mostly from First Pacific, which has a more than 20-percent stake in PLDT. The dominant carrier, in turn, owns cash-rich Smart and Pilipino Telephone Corp.

Wire reports in March said that First Pacific was looking at Excelcomindo Pratama, Indonesia's third-largest mobile operator. Telekomindo Primabhakti, which owns 60 percent of the company, reportedly wants to sell its holdings.

The stake is attracting interests from other regional players like Australia's Telstar Corp. and China Telecom.

The population clock is ticking

MindanaWorld

Joji Ilagan-Bian

THE PHILIPPINE Chamber of Commerce and Industry's advocacy of population management started two years ago when it became very clear to the business sector that our population was growing too fast and something had to be done about it to prevent a scenario of an over populated, economically poor and environmentally degraded nation.

Today, after two years of a massive information campaign, we have decided to go beyond the "lip service" phase and transform our commitment into action plans to make the majority of our people understand the importance of planning their family well. Hopefully, this would result in an environment of reduced poverty, robust economy, with many having greater access to health services and education.

Population, therefore, is an issue that is closely linked with economic and human development which government has the responsibility to address. The political will and the support of both the national government and the LGUs will be critical to the success of the population management effort in the country.

The private sector, both business and civil society, cannot pursue this alone—government is expected to play a significant role in terms of legislation, policy setting and allocation of resources to ensure full implementation of programs.

Lowest GDP per capita

The recent "Ulat ng Bayan" Survey on Family Planning conducted by Pulse Asia shows that 82 percent, or roughly 8 out of 10 voters, would support candidates who favor giving couples a free choice of family planning methods.

Exactly 82 percent of the voters also said that they would support a candidate who favors a law on family planning. The recent survey also showed that about 50 percent of the voters think that a candidate's support of the family planning issue would mean victory for the said candidate. Six percent of the voters believe that a candidate would lose if he or she adopts the issue. About 41% said the issue would have no effect on the candidate's chances of winning an election.

Today, the Philippines has a population growth rate of 2.36 percent—about 4 persons are born every minute or 2 million every year. We have the second lowest GDP per capita among the Asean members, and the worst poverty incidence.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), 82,000 children below 5 years old die of malnutrition and infection every year. That is 225 children a day. Unicef also said our rice consumption is second to the lowest in Southeast Asia—95 kilos per person per year due to low supply and high price. Our ratio of savings against GNP is 16 percent. In Indonesia, it is 24 percent, while in Thailand, it is 32 percent.

Too poor to save

Majority of our people are too poor to save—they earn just enough for food and barely little or none at all to spend for education and health services.

We all know that a low savings rate translates to low capital formation and results in poor investments in infrastructure like roads, bridges, schools, etc. This, in turn, results in a poorly educated, non-competitive population with low productivity.

In 2000, 2 out of 5 Filipinos, or 39.5 percent, are poor. In Indonesia, the figure stands at 23.4 percent (1 out of 4 people), while in Thailand, it is 8.1 percent (1 out of 8). In Singapore, there is no reported incidence of poverty.

We know that the poorest of the poor provinces in the country is in Mindanao. Our greatest natural resource is our vast fertile land, but this might not be the scenario after 20 or 30 years. There is a possibility that our agricultural richness may be depleted, becoming scarcer every year.

As of 2000, the annual average population growth rate in Western Mindanao is 2.18 percent; in Northern Mindanao, 2.19 percent; in Southern Mindanao, 2.6 percent; in Central Mindanao, 2.08 percent; in the ARMM, 3.86 percent; in CARAGA 1.63 percent.

A better Mindanao

The ARMM registered a population growth higher than the national average of 2.8 percent. As of 2000, Mindanao has a poverty rate of 38.5 percent; while the national average hovers around 40 percent.

Today, it is imperative for national and local candidates to clearly articulate to those of us in Mindanao their agenda and platforms on how they would address the issue pertaining to population and development. We have to do this now to ensure that our children will have a better Mindanao!

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce had hosted a series of fora, called "Convergence: Business and Politics," in Iloilo, Cavite and Davao, in partnership with the Iloilo Chamber of Commerce, Cavite City Chamber of Commerce and the Davao City Chamber of Commerce with the support of Commercial Market Strategies.

Key political candidates in the three cities were invited to present their views on population management and to impress upon the voting public that they would be true to their promise of providing a better life for all.

(Email comments and suggestions to jojibian2@yahoo.com)

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300,000 - 499,999	5.50	5.75	5.75	6.00	7.00
500,000 - 999,999	6.00	6.25	6.50	6.50	8.00
1,000,000 - 4,999,999	7.75	7.75	7.75	7.75	8.00
5 million and up	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00

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Final phase of Meralco refund program seen ready in June

By Abigail L. Ho

LOPEZ-LED Manila Electric Co. may finally be able to submit by May or June its final proposal for the fourth phase of its P30-billion refund for overcharges as most of its large customers have expressed at least some agreement to its draft proposal.

Meralco vice president for corporate communications Elpi Cuna said the company recently finished presenting its draft proposal to the Makati Business Club and that members of the organization seemed amenable to the company's proposed method of giving out the refund.

"The proposal was more or less acceptable to them, the issuance of refund notes. But there are still a few kinks that need fixing," he said. "We've met with most of the big groups already. We may be filing a proposal with the (Energy Regulatory Commission) by May or June."

Meralco is firming up a proposal on how it will conduct the costliest phase of its Supreme Court-mandated P30-billion refund for income tax charges passed on to customers from February 1994 to April 2003.

Its most feasible option right now, based on an internal study conducted by its finance department, was the issuance of zero coupon bonds called refund notes.

The firm plans to employ a two-tranche refund scheme for its commercial and industrial customers, which represent 2 percent of its total customer base.

Smaller industrial and commercial users will have their refund credited to future bills, while other large customers, after exceeding a specific volume usage cut-off, will have a choice whether to have their refund credited to future bills or get refund notes.

Meralco refund task force project manager Cheri Torres said in an earlier interview that the company was targeting January next year to give out refunds to smaller industrial and commercial users.

Bigger consumers, on the other hand, would start getting their refunds by May 2005, she said.

FIL-ESTATE Ecocentrum, the commercial, business and tourism component of the Southwoods project, is now in the final stage of completing its road network development. This will make access to and from the Southwoods interchange easier. Shown in photo are (from left) Interpro president Gus Salgado; Fil-Estate Ecocentrum president Ferdinand Santos; SVP Hubert Agcamaran; EVP Rafael Perez de Tagle Jr.; and Interpro's Eric Rok.

Smart says PLDT debt swap won't affect dividends to PLDT

By Clarissa S. Batino

SMART Communications Inc. has assured that its dividend payout to Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. would not be affected by its plan to acquire debts and equity of PLDT in Pilipino Telephone Corp.

Smart is scheduled to announce today whether it was able to convince creditors to swap at least 75 percent of their outstanding exposure to Piltel with a Smart debt, cash but at a steep discount, or a low-yield, 12-year, sovereign-guaranteed bonds.

A successful debt swap would allow Smart, PLDT's cash cow and the country's most profitable company, to acquire PLDT's stake in Piltel. The affiliate mobile phone company announced on Friday that it likely made a turnaround with a net income of P8 million in the first quarter.

"When we do our computations, the priority overall is to deleverage PLDT. All dividends would have to be intact. What we are doing would not affect the dividend upstream to PLDT," Nazareno said.

"At any rate, the balance sheet of Smart is strong, the income is good and cash flow is healthy," Nazareno added.

PLDT and Smart would announce their first-quarter results tomorrow. The dominant carrier is expected to almost double its net profit in the first quarter from P2.5 billion in the first three months of 2003.

PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan earlier said the company was looking to receive about P10 billion in dividends from Smart this year to meet PLDT's target of hitting a net income of more than P18 billion.

Nazareno said that the company would like to have access to the low-end market of Piltel's Talk 'N Text to sustain Smart's profitability.

The PLDT president said he believed that the low-end market segment would be the main driver of future growth.

Also, Piltel has about P13.5 billion in net operating loss carryover or Nolco benefits incurred in 2001 and 2002 that should lead to tax savings of P4.3 billion this year and next for Smart.

As of midday Thursday, however, Nazareno said that Smart has not met the 75-percent threshold necessary to complete the debt swap.

Smart said it would only proceed with the debt transaction if creditors representing at least 75 percent of existing Piltel debt by value participated in the offer.

Last March 23, Smart gave Piltel creditors until April 20 to respond to its offer to absorb P20.5 billion in obligations of its affiliate through cash settlement at a discount, conversion into Smart's medium-term dollar loans at a discount, conversion into a 10-year debt of Smart, or a swap with sovereign-guaranteed dollar bonds held by Smart.

But the offer period was extended to April 30 after failing to solicit sufficient creditor interest in time.

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Alabang Country Club B	1,200,000
Baguio Country Club	660,000
Canlubang Golf	430,000
Manila Southwoods A	420,000
Sherwood A	60,000

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Alta Vista	Pls. Call	-
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Camp John Hay	240,000	-
Capital Hills	160,000	125,000
Celebrity Sports	160,000	-
Club Filipino	140,000	-
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	300,000*	-
Eastridge A/B*	-	70,000/90,000*
Forest Hills A/C*	170,000/250,000*	-
Manila Golf Ind/Corp.*	-	9,500,000
Manila Polo	-	2,250,000
Makati Sports Club	200,000	Pls. Call
Metropolitan Club A/B*	-	90,000/100,000*
Mimosa C2/C3*	220,000	-
Mimosa Golf Ind.	180,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	-	240,000*/Pls. Call**
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	160,000*/180,000**	-
Royale Tagaytay CC	Pls. Call	-
Spa & Lodge	700,000	500,000
Sta. Elena A/B*	1,700,000*	1,200,000/1,250,000*
Tagaytay Country Club	-	300,000
Tagaytay Highlands Golf	810,000	-
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Valley Golf & CC	280,000	-
Valle Verde Ind	150,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	6,700,000	-

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CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Baguio Country Club	-	650,000
Capitol Hills	-	180,000
Celebrity Sports Club	-	155,000
Engleridge "A"	-	270,000
Evercrest "Indv."	-	70,000
Fairways & Blue Water "B1"	-	200,000
Fairways & Blue Water "C1"	-	320,000
Fontana "A"	150,000	-
Fontana "D"	-	70,000
Forest Hills "A"	130,000	170,000
Forest Hills "B"	170,000	210,000
Manila Polo	2,200,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	-	250.00
Orchard "A"	-	175,000
Punta Fuego	480,000	-
Riviera "C"	-	180,000
Rockwell Club		320,000
Royale Tagaytay	-	70,000
Sherwoods "A"	-	100,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,150,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	-	700,000
Tagaytay Country Club	310,000	-
Valle Verde "Corp"	-	280,000
Wack Wack Golf Club	6,400,000	-

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Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,000,000	1,200,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	-	1,300,000
Baguio Country Club	600,000	650,000
Camp John Hay	-	250,000
Canlubang	-	500,000
Capitol Hills	135,000	180,000
Cebu Country Club	1,400,000	Please Call
Celebrity Sports Club	-	170,000
Club Filipino	100,000	170,000
Eagleridge "A"	220,000	270,000
Eagleridge "B"	280,000	350,000
Eagleridge "C"	-	350,000
Forest Hills "A"		180,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	230,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	240,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	250,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	10,500,000	-
Manila Golf (Individual)	9,500,000	10,400,000
Manila Polo	2,250,000	2,400,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	350,000	400,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	500,000	650,000
Manila Yacht Club	-	400,000
Metroclub "A"	110,000	-
Mimosa (Corporate)	250,000	275,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	150,000	Please Call
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	-	350,000
Orchard Golf Club "A"	170,000	200,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	240,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "C"	-	330,000
Riviera Golf Club "A"	-	90,000
Riviera Golf Club "B"	-	110,000
Riviera Golf Club "C"	-	125,000
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	70,000
Sherwood Hills "C"	-	180,000
Rockwell	-	380,000
Spa & Lodge	550,000	600,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,150,000	1,400,000
Sta. Elena "B"	1,500,000	1,700,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	180,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	310,000	350,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	850,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	800,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	150,000
Valley Golf	230,000	300,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,500,000	-

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 30, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	50,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17	17.5	17	17.5	71,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	50	50	48.5	48.5	744,000
China Banking Corp.	660	660	660	660	80
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,800
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39.5	39.5	39	39	15,500
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	10,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25	25.5	25	25	102,100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.5	3,100
Security Bank Corp.	16.75	17	16.75	17	10,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	24	24	24	24	2,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1	25,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	215	215	215	215	100
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	50,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1470	1470	1465	1465	520
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24.75	24.75	24.25	24.25	10,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	680,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	850	880	845	850	88,010
ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.037	0.037	0.037	100,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.68	1.7	16,454,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	200,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1125	1125	1075	1080	217,930
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	5,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.5	19.75	19.25	19.25	166,100
Manila Electric Co. B	30.5	31	30	30.5	569,400
Petron Corp.	3.25	3.3	3.25	3.25	2,311,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	20,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.36	1.44	1.36	1.42	407,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	41,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	3	3	3	3	7,000
Sanitary Wares Mfg. Corp.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	500,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	569,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	28	28.5	28	28.5	17,200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	20	20.75	20	20.5	544,800
RFM Corp.	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	10,000
San Miguel Corp. A	59	59.5	59	59.5	76,500
San Miguel Corp. B	74	74.5	73.5	74.5	152,700
Universal Robina Corp.	6.7	7	6.7	7	1,445,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	1,333,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	256,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	140,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	10,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	50,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.57	0.57	0.56	0.56	5,060,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	400,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	2,100,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	28.5	28.5	28	28	892,000
Ionics Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	6,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	100,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.14	1.16	1.12	1.12	5,366,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	2,100,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	15	15.25	15	15.25	23,900
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	200,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.245	0.25	0.245	0.25	6,270,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	10,400,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	10,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	25,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	2,000
Pryce Corp.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	1,710,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	200,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.5	0.52	0.5	0.51	880,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	230,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.24	170,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	24.75	24.75	24	24	1,958,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	9,081,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	1,550,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	4,620,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	1,178,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.2	250,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	900,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.2	2,670,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	70,000
Omico Corp.	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	5,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	40,000

Transport firm bullish on RP tourism prospect

ISLAND Transvoyager Inc. (ITI), a company engaged in air taxi and air charter operations, has expressed confidence in the country's tourism industry even as it completed the overhaul and inspection program of its aircraft.

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Metrobank group . . .

From page B0

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"Surprisingly, 2004 is turning out to be a good year for us compared to our competitors who were saying that opportunities will be limited by uncertainties leading to the presidential elections," Dispo said.

Doris C. Dumlao

Final phase of Meralco refund program seen ready in June

By Abigail L. Ho

LOPEZ-LED Manila Electric Co. may finally be able to submit by May or June its final proposal for the fourth phase of its P30-billion refund for overcharges as most of its large customers have expressed at least some agreement to its draft proposal.

Meralco vice president for corporate communications Elpi Cuna said the company recently finished presenting its draft proposal to the Makati Business Club and that members of the organization seemed amenable to the company's proposed method of giving out the refund.

"The proposal was more or less acceptable to them, the issuance of refund notes. But there are still a few kinks that need fixing," he said. "We've met with most of the big groups already. We may be filing a proposal with the (Energy Regulatory Commission) by May or June."

Meralco is firming up a proposal on how it will conduct the costliest phase of its Supreme Court-mandated P30-billion refund for income tax charges passed on to customers from February 1994 to April 2003.

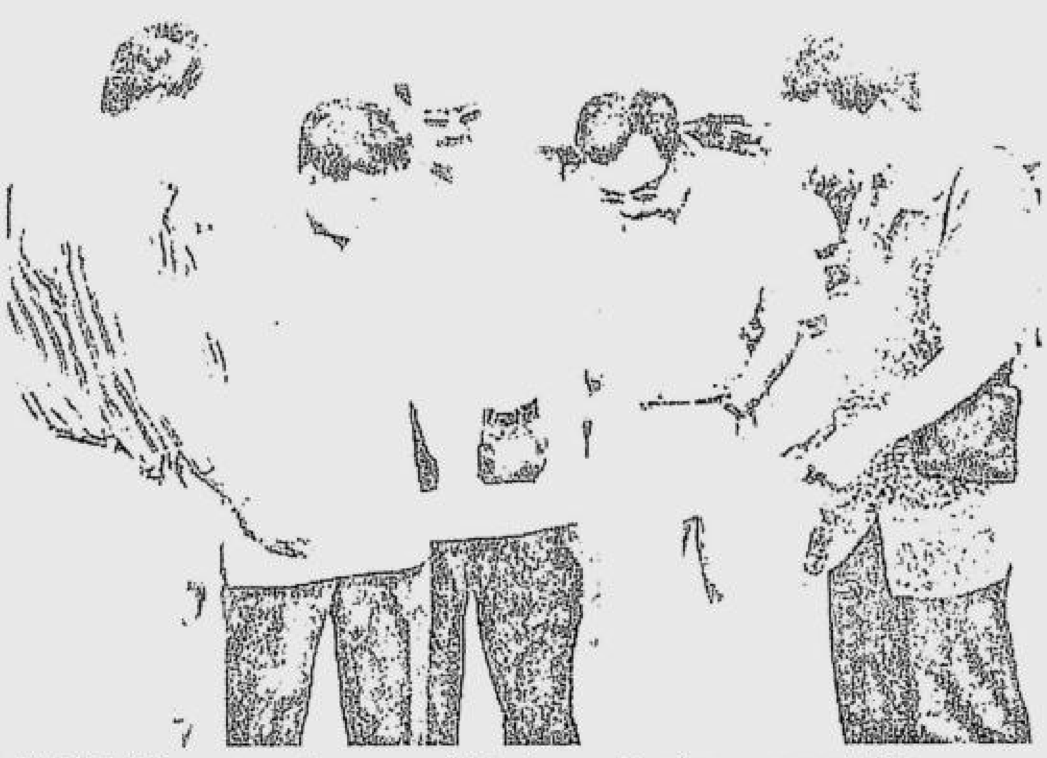
Its most feasible option right now, based on an internal study conducted by its finance department, was the issuance of zero coupon bonds called refund notes.

The firm plans to employ a two-tranche refund scheme for its commercial and industrial customers, which represent 2 percent of its total customer base.

Smaller industrial and commercial users will have their refund credited to future bills, while other large customers, after exceeding a specific volume usage cut-off, will have a choice whether to have their refund credited to future bills or get refund notes.

Meralco refund task force project manager Cheri Torres said in an earlier interview that the company was targeting January next year to give out refunds to smaller industrial and commercial users.

Bigger consumers, on the other hand, would start getting their refunds by May 2005, she said.



FIL-ESTATE Ecocentrum, the commercial, business and tourism component of the Southwoods project, is now in the final stage of completing its road network development. This will make access to and from the Southwoods interchange easier. Shown in photo are (from left) Interpro president Gus Salgado; Fil-Estate Ecocentrum president Ferdinand Santos; SVP Hubert Agcamaran; EVP Rafael Perez de Tagle Jr.; and Interpro's Eric Rok.

Smart says PLDT debt swap won't affect dividends to PLDT

By Clarissa S. Batino

SMART Communications Inc. has assured that its dividend payout to Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. would not be affected by its plan to acquire debts and equity of PLDT in Pilipino Telephone Corp.

Smart is scheduled to announce today whether it was able to convince creditors to swap at least 75 percent of their outstanding exposure to Piltel with a Smart debt, cash but at a steep discount, or a low-yield, 12-year, sovereign-guaranteed bonds.

A successful debt swap would allow Smart, PLDT's cash cow and the country's most profitable company, to acquire PLDT's stake in Piltel. The affiliate mobile phone company announced on Friday that it likely made a turnaround with a net income of P8 million in the first quarter.

"When we do our computations, the priority overall is to deleverage PLDT. All dividends would have to be intact. What we are doing would not affect the dividend upstream to PLDT," Nazareno said.

"At any rate, the balance sheet of Smart is strong, the income is good and cash flow is healthy," Nazareno added.

PLDT and Smart would announce their first-quarter results tomorrow. The dominant carrier is expected to almost double its net profit in the first quarter from P2.5 billion in the first three months of 2003.

PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan earlier said the company was looking to receive about P10 billion in dividends from Smart this year to meet PLDT's target of hitting a net income of more than P18 billion.

Nazareno said that the company would like to have access to the low-end market of Piltel's Talk 'N Text to sustain Smart's profitability.

The PLDT president said he believed that the low end market segment would be the main driver of future growth.

Also, Piltel has about P13.5 billion in net operating loss carryover or Nolco benefits incurred in 2001 and 2002 that should lead to tax savings of P4.3 billion this year and next for Smart.

As of midday Thursday, however, Nazareno said that Smart has not met the 75-percent threshold necessary to complete the debt swap.

Smart said it would only proceed with the debt transaction if creditors representing at least 75 percent of existing Piltel debt by value participated in the offer.

Last March 23, Smart gave Piltel creditors until April 20 to respond to its offer to absorb P20.5 billion in obligations of its affiliate through cash settlement at a discount, conversion into Smart's medium-term dollar loans at a discount, conversion into a 10-year debt of Smart or a swap with sovereign-guaranteed dollar bonds held by Smart.

But the offer period was extended to April 30 after failing to solicit sufficient creditor interest in time.

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Club Filipino	140,000	
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Eastridge A/B		
Forest Hills A		
Manila Golf		
Manila Polo		2,250
Makati Sports Club		Pls.
Metropolitan Club A/B		[illegible]180
Mimosa C2/C3		
Mimosa Golf Ind	[illegible]	
Orchard A/B/C		
Riviera Golf A/B/C	[illegible]	
Royale Tagaytay CC	Pls. Call	
Spa & Lodge		[illegible]
Sta. Elena A/B		1,350
Tagaytay Country Club		30
Tagaytay Highlands Golf	[illegible]	
The Country Club	2 000	
Valley Golf & CC		
Valle Verde		
[illegible]		

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Evercrest "Indv."		70.000
Fairways & Blue Water "B1"		200 000
Fairways & Blue Water "C1"	-	320.000
Fontana "A"	150.000	-
Fontana "D"	-	70 000
Forest Hills "A"	130 000	170 000
Forest Hills "B"	170 000	210.000
Manila Polo	2,200,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	-	250.00
Orchard "A"	-	175.000
Punta Fuego	480.000	
Riviera "C"	-	180 000
Rockwell Club		320 000
Royale Tagaytay		70 000
Sherwoods "A"	-	100,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,150,000	
Tagaytay Midlands	-	700,000
Tagaytay Country Club	310,000	-
Valle Verde "Corp"	-	280.000
Wack Wack Golf Club	6.400.000	

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Mar[illegible]	2,250,000	2,400.000
Mer[illegible]	350 000	400.000
Mar[illegible]	500.000	650,000
Mar[illegible]		400,000
Mer[illegible]	110,000	-
Mu[illegible] Corpor	250.000	275,000
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[illegible] Golf "C"		350 000
[illegible] Golf Club "A"	[illegible]70.000	200 000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	240,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "C"		330,000
Riviera Golf Club "A"		90,000
Riviera Golf Club "B"		110 000
Riviera Golf Club "C"		125,000
Sherwood Hills "A"		70 000
Sherwood Hills "C"		180 000
Rockwell		380,000
Spa & Lodge	550.000	600,000
Sta. Elena "A"	[illegible]150 000	1,400,000
Sta. Elena "B"	[illegible]500 000	1,700,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)		180 000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)		120.000
Tagaytay Country Club	310,000	350 000
Tagaytay Highlands	[illegible]50,000	850 000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	800.000
Valle Verde (Individual)	[illegible]00.000	150.000
Valley Golf	230.000	300,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6.500 000	-

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 30, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev Bank Inc	3 15	3 15	3 15	3.15	50.000
Banco de Oro Univ Bank	17	17.5	17	17 5	71 000
Bank of the Phil Islands	50	50	48 5	48 5	744,000
China Banking Corp	660	660	660	660	80
Citystate Savings Bank	16 25	16 25	16 25	16 25	2.800
Equitable PCI Bank Inc	39 5	39 5	39	39	15.500
Export and Ind Bank Inc	0 54	0 54	0 54	0 54	10.000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25	25.5	25	25	102,100
Rizal Comm Banking Corp.	12 25	12 5	12 25	12.5	3.100
Security Bank Corp	16 75	17	16 75	17	10.500
Union Bank of the Phil	24	24	24	24	2.000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1 06	1 06	1 06	1	25.000
First Metro Invest Corp.	215	215	215	215	100
PCI Leasing & Fin Inc	1 32	1 32	1 32	1 32	50.000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1470	1470	1465	1465	520
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	24 75	24 75	24 25	24 25	10.000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	0 67	0 67	0 67	0 67	680.000
Globe Telecom Inc	850	880	845	850	88 010
ISM Communications Corp	0 037	0 037	0 037	0 037	100.000
Pilipino Tel Corp.	1 74	1.74	1 68	1 7	16.454.000
Phil Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.125	0 125	0 125	0 125	200.000
Phil Long Dis Tel Co	1125	1125	1075	1080	217.930
Philweb Corp	0 012	0 012	0 012	0 012	5.200.000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co A	19 5	19 75	19 25	19 25	166.100
Manila Electric Co B	30 5	31	30	30 5	569 400
Petron Corp	3 25	3 3	3 25	3 25	2.311,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2 16	2 16	2 16	2 16	20.000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc	1 30	1 44	1 36	1 42	407.000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2 95	2 95	2 95	2 95	41.000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Phil Nat'l Const Corp	3	3	3	3	7.000
Sanitary Wares Mfg Corp.	0 17	0 17	0 17	0 17	500.000
Union Cement Corp	1 66	1 66	1 66	1.66	569.000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc	28	28 5	28	28 5	17.200
Jollibee Foods Corp	20	20 75	20	20 5	544 800
RFM Corp	0 57	0 57	0 57	0 57	10.000
San Miguel Corp A	59	59 5	59	59 5	76.500
San Miguel Corp B	74	74 5	73 5	74 5	152 700
Universal Robina Corp.	6 7	7	6 7	7	1 445 000
Vitarich Corp	0 26	0 26	0 26	0 26	200.000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp	5 8	5 8	5 7	5 7	1,333 000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3 05	3 05	3 05	3 05	256.000
A Soriano Corp	0 94	0 94	0 94	0 94	140 000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp	0 12	0.12	0 12	0 12	10.000
ATN Holdings Inc	1 5	1 5	1 5	1 5	50.000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0 7	0 7	0 7	0 7	20 000
Benpres Holdings Corp	0 57	0 57	0 56	0 56	5,060 000
DMCI Holdings Inc	0 26	0 26	0 26	0 26	400 000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0 025	0 025	0.025	0 025	2.100 000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	28.5	28 5	28	28	892 000
Ionics Inc	1.2	1 2	1 2	1 2	6.000
Macroasia Corp	0 52	0 52	0 52	0 52	100 000
Megaworld Corp.	1 14	1 16	1 12	1 12	5.366 000
Metro Pacific Corp	0 27	0 27	0 26	0 26	2.100 000
SPI Technologies Inc.	15	15 25	15	15 25	23.900
Uniwide Holdings Inc	0 08	0 08	0 08	0 08	200 000
Wellex Industries Inc	0 245	0 25	0 245	0 25	6.270.000
Waterfront Phils Inc	0 245	0 245	0 245	0 245	10.400 000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	0 97	0 97	0 97	0 97	10.000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp	8 5	8 5	8 5	8 5	25.000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp	1 08	1 08	1 08	1 08	2 000
Pryce Corp	0 24	0 24	0 24	0 24	1,710,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0 15	0 15	0 15	0 15	200 000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp	0 5	0 52	0 5	0 51	880.000
Leisure & Resorts Corp	0 32	0 32	0.32	0 32	230.000
Premiere Ent Prod Inc	0 23	0 24	0 23	0 24	170,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs Corp Pdr	24 75	24 75	24	24	1.958.000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series U	10 5	10 5	10 5	10 5	1.500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10 5	10 5	10 5	10 5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10 5	10 5	10 5	10 5	1,400
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc	5 8	5 8	5 7	5 7	9.081 000
Cyber Bay Corp	0 115	0 115	0 115	0 115	1,550 000
Empire East Land Inc	0.22	0 225	0 22	0 225	4 620.000
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SM Prime Holding	6 3	[illegible]	6 2	6.2	2 670 000
MINING					
[illegible] Min	0 26	0 26	0 26	0 26	70.000
[illegible]	0 003	0 003	0 003	0 003	[illegible]000 000
[illegible] Min [illegible]	0 34	0 34	0 34	0 34	40.000

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Doris C. Dumlao

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The party-list election

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

THE PARTY-LIST electoral system remains a mystery to many voters. It was imported from Europe and introduced in the 1987 Constitution.

The system gives a chance to so-called "marginalized" groups—such as SSS and GSIS retirees organized as the Philippine Association of Retired Persons (PARP)—to have their elected representatives in the House.

There is a whale of a difference between the old-time district congressman and the party-list representative. The district congressman represents a geographical area, say, the second district of Camarines Sur composed of my hometown Naga City and seven towns. The party-list representative stands for a class of citizens, such as retirees belonging to PARP, spread all over the country.

The district congressman is elected by the voters in the district. The voter writes on the ballot the name of the candidate. The candidate that gets the most votes wins the election.

Two percent

The party-list representative is elected by voters nationwide. The voter writes on the ballot the name of only one party, say PARP, not the names of the individuals nominated by the party. When the Comelec adds up the votes distinctly cast nationwide in the party-list system only, each party that gets 2 percent of the total votes wins a seat. A party that gets 4 percent wins two seats. A party that gets 6 percent or more wins the maximum three seats.

The party's nominees, whose names are filed at and approved by Comelec prior to Election Day, take the seats.

It takes more votes to get elected as a party-list representative than as a district congressman. In 2001, a party-list seat was worth over 300,000 votes. In small districts such as Batanes, Biliran, Masbate and Catanduanes, a congressman can get elected with less than 50,000 votes.

The 1987 Constitution says that party-list representatives should comprise 20 percent of the House. At the start, there were 200 district congressmen, plus 50 seats reserved for party-list groups. But it is mathematically impossible to fill the 50 seats under the 2-percent rule set by Congress in the implementing law. To fill the 50 seats, each party-list winner must garner exactly 2 percent, no more no less, of the total votes cast in the system. If only one winner gets one more vote than 2 percent, the most number of seats that could be filled is only 49.

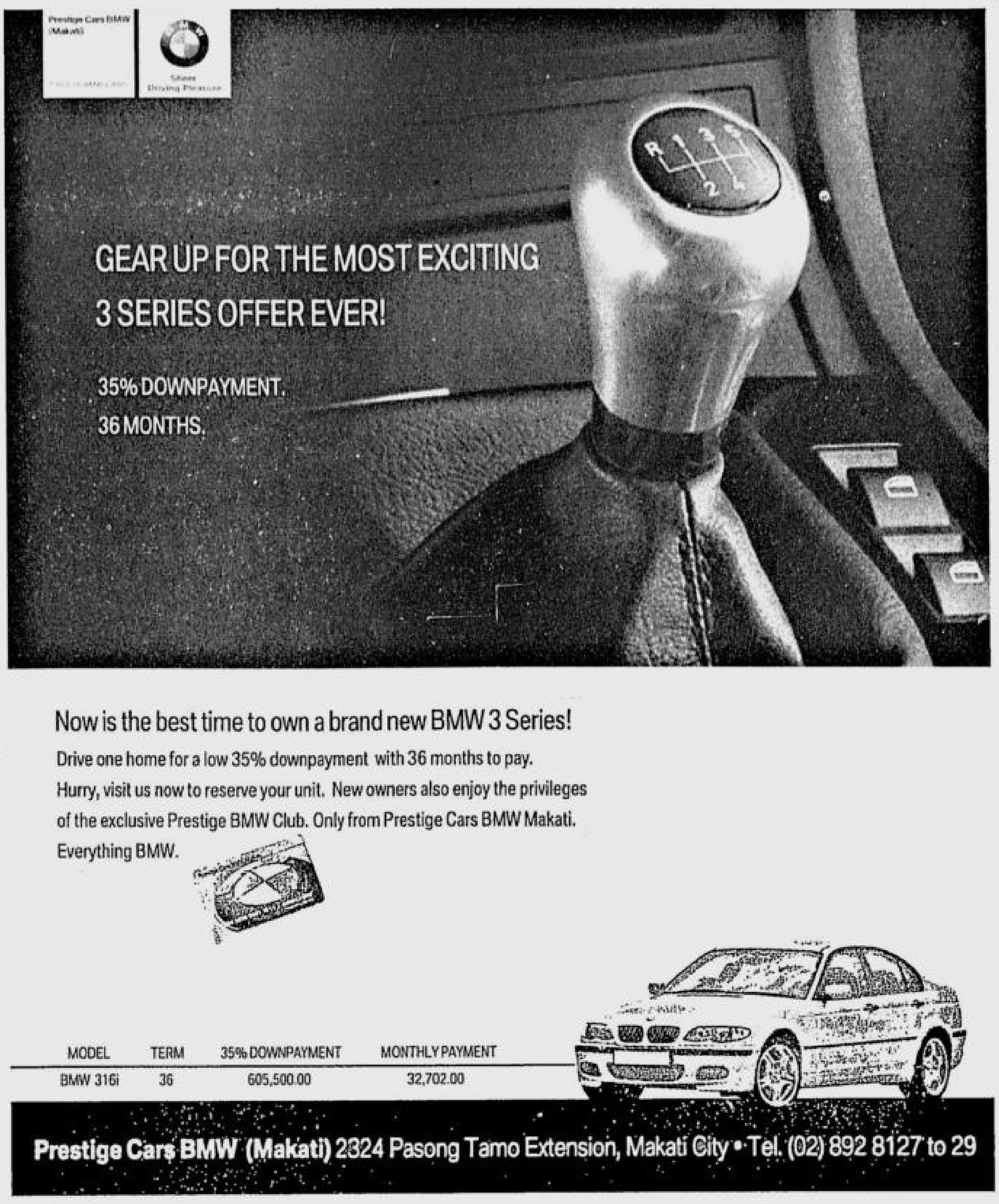
Mathematical problem

The mathematical problem has worsened because, with the opening of additional districts, the total seats supposedly reserved for party-list groups now stand at 54. To fill up all the seats will require 108 percent of the total votes cast for the system. See the mathematical impossibility?

After the 2001 elections, the Philippine Association of Retired Persons petitioned the Supreme Court to declare the party-list law unconstitutional.

But even when the mathematical problem was presented in basic grade school arithmetic, the court could not be persuaded. It seems grade school arithmetic is over the heads of our good justices.

Constitutional or not, please go out and vote in the party-list system in next week's elections. When you get to the slot for party list candidates, write in PARP. The name, Philippine Association of Retired Persons, speaks for itself. No matter how young you may be, remember: *tatanda ka rin.*



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Safety issues delay gov't coco diesel program by 6 months

By Abigail L. Ho

IT WOULD take at least another six months before the government can fully implement its program on coco diesel as local oil firms remain unsatisfied with initial findings on the safety of the diesel blend.

Teddy Reyes of the Philippine Institute of Petroleum (PIP) said more extensive research and testing should be done over the next several months to determine the feasibility of selling bottled coconut methyl ester (CME) at the oil firms' retail stations.

Reyes pointed out that it has not been established how safe the product is after it has been kept in storage over a certain period.

Also, the kind of container to hold it in should also be studied before government could launch a full-blown campaign for CME use, Reyes said.

Last February, Malacañang issued Memorandum Circular 55, mandating the use of CME-blended diesel for at least one percent of the diesel requirements of all government agencies and firms.

The government also has plans to include private vehicles in the coco diesel program.

Reyes said that there are a lot of things to be considered, not just storage and distribution safety, before the use of CME-blended diesel could be expanded to include private vehicles.

"We have to carefully study the storage, handling and distribution of the product, as well as how it will affect a vehicle's engine," Reyes said. "It will take at least six months to establish the findings, and only then can we make conclusions as to the feasibility of the use of the CME blend."

Earlier, PIP executive director Rey Marquez had asked who would shoulder the cost that might arise from the breakdown of a private vehicle's engine due to the use of coco diesel.

"PIP member companies are wary about product liability," Marquez said. "There remain questions of whether any damage attributed to CME on vehicle engines or components would be covered by the manufacturer's warranty and/or the vehicle's insurance."

"There is, therefore, a need to establish who will absorb the liability: the government, the oil companies, the vehicle manufacturers, the insurance companies, the CME manufacturers, or the retailers," he added.

The impact on prices also should not be taken lightly as, according to earlier studies, a one-percent blend of CME for every liter of diesel would redound to an additional cost of 50 centavos per liter.

Increasing the blend to 2 percent and 5 percent would jack up prices by 97 centavos and P2.44 per liter, respectively, Marquez said.

"Expenditures to cover CME handling and storage requirements still have to be added to these prices," he said.

An industry source earlier revealed that the special container for coco diesel would cost at least P12.50 apiece.

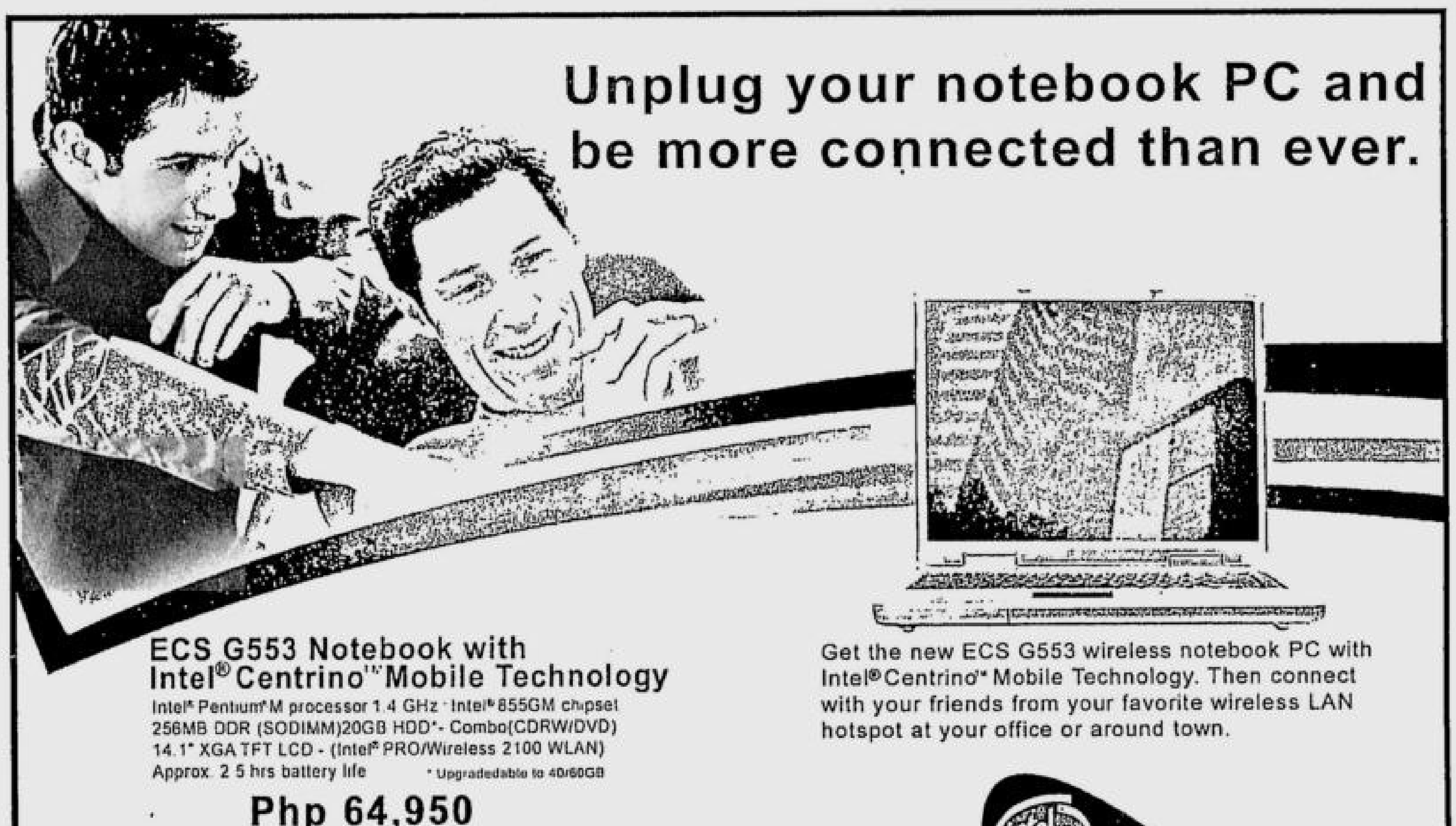
RP seen . . .

From page B1

still the most favored destination of global capital inflows so far, given improved structural policies, strong economic recoveries and the low level of global interest rates.

The Lehman Brothers report measures the levels of crisis risk in Argentina, Brazil, China, Hong Kong, Hungary, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand and Turkey.

The latest report noted that the emerging market macroeconomic and financial environment was "relatively benign" for now, but warned against complacency.



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Mr. Anastacio Martirez
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Dr. Hooi Den Huan
Associate Professor, Nanyang Business School
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RP to export hybrid rice to parts of Asia, Africa

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE PHILIPPINES is planning to export hybrid rice seeds to other Asian countries, such as Japan and Malaysia, and to parts of Africa next year.

According to Henry Lim Bon Liong, head of a firm that grows hybrid rice seeds, an additional area of 200,000 to 300,000 hectares would have to be planted with hybrid rice before the Philippines could export to neighboring countries.

"This of course will be done after we have stabilized the domestic production and we have enough rice buffer stocks," said Lim, president of SL Agritech Corp.

He told the INQUIRER that attaining rice self-sufficiency could be done next year if the government helps in securing arable land that could be cultivated with the hybrid rice seeds.

Even though there are already four hybrid rice distributors in the market, there is still not enough supply to satisfy the growing requirements of local farmers, Lim said.

The distributors include Monsanto Philippines, Bayer Crop Science Philippines and the Philippine Rice Research Institute.

Lim's firm brought to the Philippines the hybrid rice seed technology from China. SL Agritech Corp. perfected the technology, increasing the yield from an average of 4 metric tons per hectare to 9 metric tons per hectare.

Chinese scientist Dr. Yuan Long Ping developed the hybrid rice, which now feeds the entire Chinese population.

The Department of Agriculture is now pushing the hybrid rice seed technology and has been subsidizing half the price the hybrid seeds which are sold for P2,400 per bag.

Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. in interview said that the hybrid rice technology could be the answer to the country's rice problem.

Lorenzo said that with the technology, he hopes to cut down the country's rice imports that has cost the government P10 to P15 billion.

But some local farmers are not keen on using hybrid rice seeds. Cultivating hybrid rice, they said, is too expensive.

But according to Lim, the "higher yields" would offset the cost of cultivating hybrid rice.

"What is the P2,400 if they (farmers) could earn more than P70,000 in income?" Lim asked.

BIR to turn down plea of leasing companies

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue may turn down the request of leasing companies to retain them under the value-added tax system, which the firms consider to be favorable for them.

BIR Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares said that the law restoring the gross receipt tax system to cover banks and financial institutions should include leasing companies because they fall under the category of financial entities.

Republic Act No. 9238, which restored the VAT system and replaced the gross receipt tax (GRT) system in collecting taxes from banks and other financial institutions, took effect in January this year.

But the Philippine Finance Association last week called for its retention under the VAT system, saying the GRT system will make it difficult for them to compete against banks.

They said following the VAT system will allow them to save more because the tax system allows them to deduct their input VAT payments from the total VAT liabilities they have to remit to the BIR. *Michelle V. Remo*

DTI steps up campaign vs pyramid scam firms

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has stepped up its campaign against firms involved in pyramid schemes and other deceptive sales practices through joint efforts with other government agencies as well as the private sector.

Trade Undersecretary Adrian S. Cristobal Jr. in a statement explained that the latest effort involved a three-pronged approach.

"First we evaluate the marketing plans of companies that are subject of inquiries from the general public, then we pursue administrative action and prosecute cases if needed," Cristobal said. "Then we have this continuous information campaign to help consumers to be more aware of pyramiding schemes."

The group Direct Selling Association of the Philippines is helping the government conduct the education campaign. The group has already given an initial presentation to DTI field personnel, Cristobal said.

The official admitted that while pyramiding schemes are becoming more and more sophisticated, the government could not prosecute companies involved in it all at once.

He added that a number of companies now under scrutiny are set to present their marketing plans for evaluation.

In March, Cristobal warned the public against falling for pyramiding schemes disguised as direct-marketing activities as the DTI noted a resurgence of inquiries on whether certain firms were legitimate.

Cristobal said that quite a number of inquiries came from embassies in countries where there are large populations of Filipino contract workers.

In a related development, the DTI warned consumers against firms enticing would-be customers through promises of "free gifts."

Cristobal said that the DTI is monitoring establishments using such tactics to sell their products.

Cristobal encouraged victims to file formal complaints against the firms to enable the DTI to take action.

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SENATOR AQUILINO Q. PIMENTEL, JR.
Principal author and "Father" of the Local Government Code reports to all barangay officials

Dear Kapitan at mga Kagawad:

As the principal author and "Father" of the Local Government Code, I would like to report on my continuing efforts to empower local government units (LGUs) and bring more funds and development to your barangay.

From the time the Local Government Code became law in 1992 up to 2004, over 1 TRILLION PESOS had been remitted to all provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays of the Philippines as their internal revenue allotment (IRA) shares. More particularly, over its twelve-year existence, the Code brought LGUs the following amounts:

Provinces	P253.02 Billion
Cities	P253.02 Billion
Municipalities	P374.04 Billion
All Barangays	P220.03 Billion

The IRA is where the funding for your roads, bridges, community centers, schools, hospitals and all other LGU projects come from.

For the year 2003 alone, Barangay Alitao in Tayabas, Quezon, the smallest barangay in the Philippines with a population of only 19 people, received an IRA share of P228,528.00 that its barangay officials could use for their projects. Barangay 176 in Bagong Silang, Caloocan City, the biggest barangay in the country with a population of 185,419 residents received an IRA share of P35.255 MILLION in 2003. Your barangay, which also receives a substantial IRA share, falls in between these two examples.

Prior to the Local Government Code, the BARANGAY DID NOT HAVE ANY IRA SHARE. Moreover, provinces, cities and municipalities had to beg Malacañang for funding which was always lacking in view of their very small IRA shares. This is one of the reasons why I pushed for the passage into law of the Local Government Code. I wanted to empower LGUs and provide money to fund their projects without begging from central government. NOW, ALL BARANGAYS HAVE IRA SHARES FOR THEIR PROJECTS! Moreover, the yearly IRA of all LGUs have tremendously increased over the years:

YEAR	IRA
1992	20.30 Billion
1993	36.12 Billion
1994	46.31 Billion
1995	52.04 Billion
1996	56.59 Billion
1997	71.04 Billion
1998	80.99 Billion
1999	96.78 Billion
2000	111.77 Billion
2001	111.77 Billion (re-enacted budget)
2002	134.42 Billion
2003	141.00 Billion
2004	141.00 Billion (re-enacted budget)
Total Amount	1.10013 Trillion

Your IRA income should again have increased in 2004. However, this did not happen because the administration did not pass the 2004 budget.

Incidentally, I would also like to mention that the Supreme Court, in a case I filed against the Executive Secretary of then President Fidel V. Ramos, ruled in our favor and declared unconstitutional the practice of Malacañang of withholding the release of your LGU IRA shares. Today, under pain of being cited in contempt of court, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) must release IRA shares of LGUs within five days after end of every quarter.

Finally, let me mention that I filed SENATE BILL NO. 826, which (1) gives LGUs an increased IRA share of 50% (up from 40%) from all national taxes collected and not just from the internal revenue collected by the Bureau of Internal Revenue. This is projected to increase the present IRA your LGU is receiving by 70%; and (2) entitles barangay officials to retirement benefits and increased insurance coverage from the GSIS.

With your help and should I be re-elected to the Senate in the May elections, I will pursue the passage of these amendatory bills into law in the next Congress.

May I hear your views on how we could further empower LGUs and continue to bring progress to our country.

Maraming salamat po!

NENE PIMENTEL

RE-ELECT SENATOR
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AMA NG BARANGAY

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Victorias considers sale of non-sugar companies

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SUGAR miller Victorias Milling Corp. (VMC) is exploring the possibility of selling its non-sugar businesses to strengthen its financial recovery.

"Any business that is not related to sugar, we are willing to let go," VMC chairman Omar Mier said.

VMC president Arthur Aguilar said that the company was considering the possible sale of its 100 percent stake in Victorias Foods Corp.

VFC manufactures sardines and meat products like luncheon meat and bacon. It also sells refined sugar.

The value of its non-core assets is pegged at roughly P180 million, Aguilar said.

Aside from the food business, VMC will also veer away from leisure development.

It plans to sell its 80 percent share in its golf and country club in Negros Occidental.

VMC director Abelardo Bugay and president of the country club said a Korean investor who manages a $1-billion charity foundation for retirees is seriously eyeing the purchase of the golf club shares.

VMC meanwhile will keep its 55 percent owned packaging unit Victorias Quality Packing Co. Inc. and possibly spin off its engineering division into a separate entity.

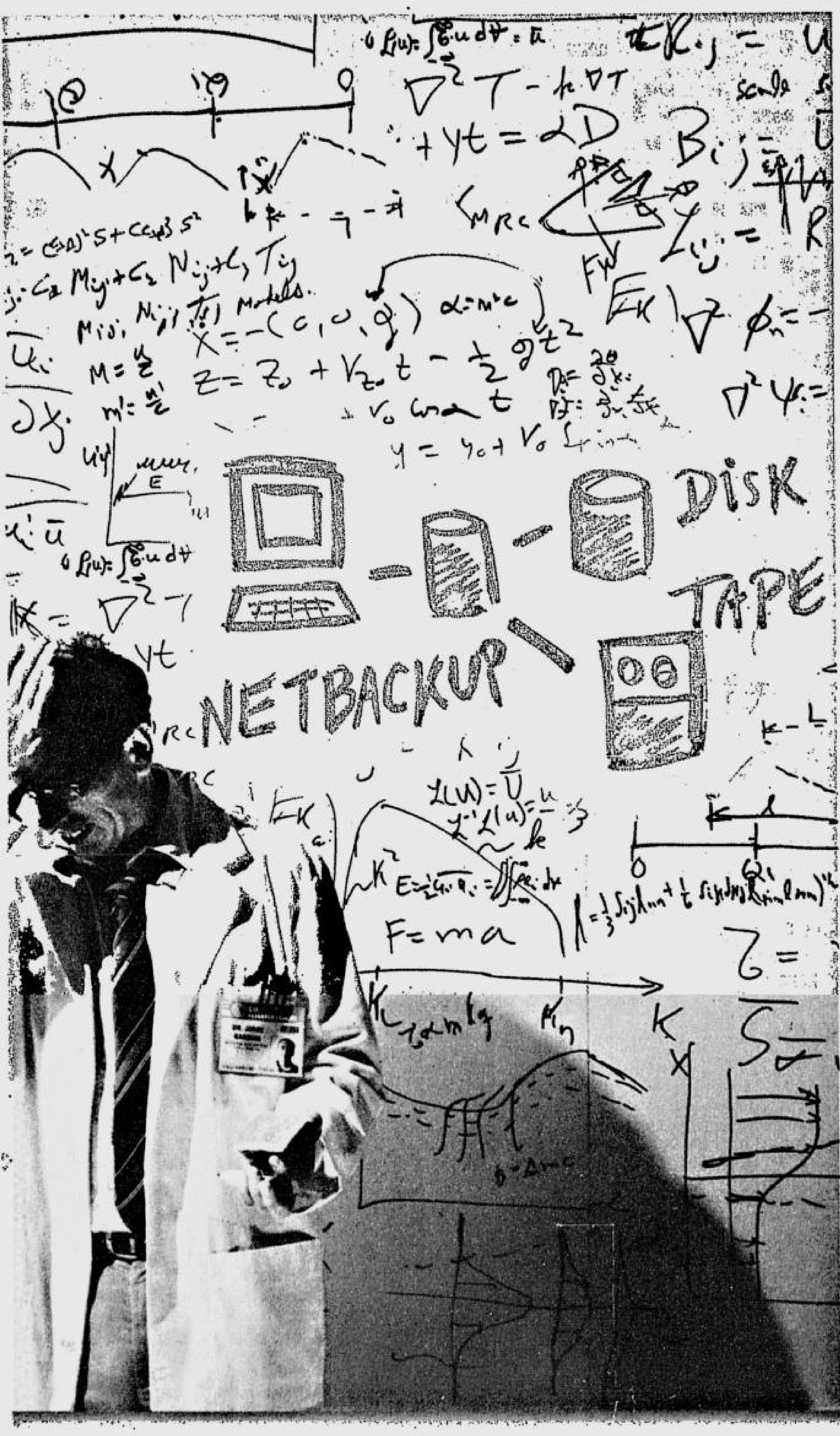
By paring down its debts, VMC expects to increase its income before taxes and financing charges to P1.2 billion over the next three years from the current P740 million.

Victorias faces P865 million in principal payments in 2006 and 2007.

Creditor banks who took over the sugar refiner three years ago hold 69.5 percent of the company's shares.

Victorias was forced to seek debt relief in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

Its debt crisis was traced partly to its aggressive diversification program in the 1990s to non-sugar related businesses, which included food manufacturing and cutflower production.



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Japan helps RP study Subic-La Union rail extension

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE JAPANESE Embassy is lending a hand to confirm the feasibility of extending the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway Project (SCTEP) to Rosario in La Union.

Felicito Payumo, chair of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, said the study was "positive and it would be applied for a loan" from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

"The Subic-La Union stretch would be about the same length of the original project, or 90 kilometers, but it would cost less," Payumo added.

The official said the extension would be on the eastern side of the MacArthur highway and would pass mostly through rice fields.

Government data showed that the SCTEP would run at 94 km and costs about $375 million or P19 billion.

It aims to provide a direct link among the Clark Special Economic Zone, Subic Bay Freeport Zone, the Luisita Park in Tarlac and the Bataan Technology Park.

The SCTEP is seen to "create the backbone of a new economic growth corridor, which in time would be more significant than Metro Manila."

Payumo said the revenue potential of the Subic-La Union expressway was bigger than that of the SCTEP because, unlike the latter, it covered mainstream traffic.

"This will improve access of cargo and people in Northern Luzon to the port facilities of Subic and Clark," he said. "Travel time from La Union to Subic would be cut from 4 hours to 1.5 hours."

"Industries like those located at the Baguio economic zone would benefit from this. Texas Instruments, for example, would no longer need to export out of Manila," Payumo added.

He added that the tourism industry would also be given a boost as the proposed expressway would ease the movement of people to and from the different tourist destinations in the region—Baguio City, Ilocos Norte and Subic.

"The potential of tourism from China is very big due to the direct flight between Laoag City and Shanghai," he said.

In a related development, Payumo said the $215-million Subic Port Development project broke ground last week.

He said the new port was expected to be able to serve ships that carry 3,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs), which comprise about 70 percent of all new ships being built Subic's current port capacity could only cater to ships that carry between 300 and 400 TEUs.

East Asian Growth Area enters revitalization phase

FEATURE

DAVAO CITY—Some 10 years after its birth, the East Asian Growth Area, which groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, enters its "revitalization" phase following the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

This according to former Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Paul Dominguez, who helped push the idea of fostering a regional growth area during the time of President Fidel V. Ramos.

There have been concrete gains.

Tourist arrivals in Mindanao rose by 253.08 percent in 1996, two years after BIMP-Eaga was launched.

In 1999, over P3 billion in investments were poured into the island-region. And in 2003, Southern Mindanao's export figure to Eaga member-countries totaled $44 million.

Minimizing poverty

The idea was prompted by the desire to find ways to stir economic development in Mindanao and minimize poverty that has been fueling unrest.

"The Philippine government views this initiative as an important mechanism to accelerate growth and reduce poverty levels of Mindanao which, in turn, are anticipated to bring about lasting peace and sustained development in Mindanao. We believe that this strategy has been moderately successful as we have noted an increase in the number of BIMP-Eaga related events conducted in Mindanao and Palawan," Dominguez said.

While the concept of the Eaga's regional economic cooperation promotes the development of less developed regions, Mindanao and Palawan were included as the Philippines' focus areas for the sub-region.

These two resource-laden areas were strategically positioned for regional economic integration in the 1.6 million square kilometer growth triangle with a population of 57.5 million.

Concrete gains

Among the first concrete gains of Eaga in Mindanao was the opening of air and sea links, which helped ease trade and travel activities between the neighboring areas.

These links included the opening of the Davao-Manado air route in 1992.

Manado and the provinces of North Sulawesi, South Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, Southeast Sulawesi, East Kalimantan, West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, Irian Jaya, Maluku, North Maluku and Gorontalo, are the focus areas of Eaga in Indonesia.

The three-day circuitous route of flying from Mindanao to Manado via Manila and Jakarta was cut into a one-hour flight with Bouraq Airlines.

In 1995, the Davao-Kota Kinabalu route was opened by the Malaysian airlines in 1995.

The airline suffered during the financial crisis and shut down the service in 1998.

When the adverse effects of the financial crisis started to ease, several links resumed with new players.

The most recent air route opened was the General Santos-Manado, served by Merpati Nusantara Airlines of Indonesia.

Today, flights are twice weekly from Davao to Manado and once per week from Gensan to Manado served both by Bouraq and Merpati Nusantara Airlines.

PT Humpuss International, an Indonesian shipping company, also started serving the Bitung-General Santos route.

New sea routes

Also the traditional yet informal trading between Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Sandakan in Malaysia has become more vibrant with the establishment of the Zamboanga-Sandakan sea route.

Sandakan, which is in Sabah and other federal states of Labuan and Sarawak are among Malaysia's focus in the economic cooperation.

With the increased economic activity between the member-countries, hotel occupancy in Mindanao rose by 14.93 percent per year during Eaga's first five years.

Recent figures from the Department of Trade and Industry revealed that Western Mindanao's export figures to Eaga member-countries rose to $39 million.

Such upbeat performance, Trade and Industry Secretary Cesar Purisima said, was attributed to Mindanao's link in the regional grouping.

"We have to be aggressive in pushing the BIMP-Eaga agenda to work. By opening borders and increasing available infrastructure, we are opening more opportunities for trade and investments," Purisima said.

With the economic gains from the cooperation, government officials agreed that peace is at hand in Mindanao.

Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jesus Dureza, who also chairs the Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo), is upbeat about the future.

He is optimistic that as the economic cooperation strengthens, more opportunities will be unlocked and great turnaround investments are expected to come to Mindanao. *Jeffrey M. Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Port project starts in Subic

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—The $215-million Subic port development project has formally started with a groundbreaking ceremony held last week.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said in a speech delivered by Senior Deputy Executive Secretary Joaquin Lagonera that the former American Naval Base was fast becoming a "container transport hub."

The project, funded by a loan from Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), involves the construction of a new container terminal at Cubi Point, the renovation of selected existing wharves within Subic, and the procurement of modern container handling and navigational equipment.

"We have to take advantage of the great economic opportunities that the tremendous containership business can offer by developing the potentials of the Subic Freeport to the fullest," Ms Macapagal said.

She urged SBMA officials not to lose their momentum in making Subic a regional container terminal and industrial hub and a tourism haven.

Payumo said the $215-million Subic port development project would be the major portal of the new Global Gateway, an alliance between the Subic and Clark development authorities.

Minister Akio Egawa, deputy chief of mission from the Japanese Embassy, said the project's groundbreaking ceremony marked the beginning of another collaborative work between the Japanese and Filipinos to spur economic growth in the country.

"The massive potential of this project to contribute to the socioeconomic development of so many people in this part of the country is one of the main reasons the Japanese government financed this project," Egawa said.

He said the port development would be supported and complemented by other Japan-funded projects such as the Subic-Clark-Tarlac expressway project and the Subic Bay freeport environmental management project. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Phividec investments reach ₱21.94B in '03

TAGOLOAN, Misamis Oriental— Investments in Northern Mindanao surged by more than 17-fold in 2003, indicating renewed interest in the modern industrial estates here.

Data generated by the Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo) showed that the project cost of registered investments in the Philippine Veterans Investment Development Corp. (Phividec) Industrial Estate in Misamis Oriental (PIE-MO) reached P21.94 billion in 2003, a sharp increase from P1.25 billion in 2002.

At least 14 new projects were registered in 2003 compared to six in 2002, creating a total of 3,737 new jobs.

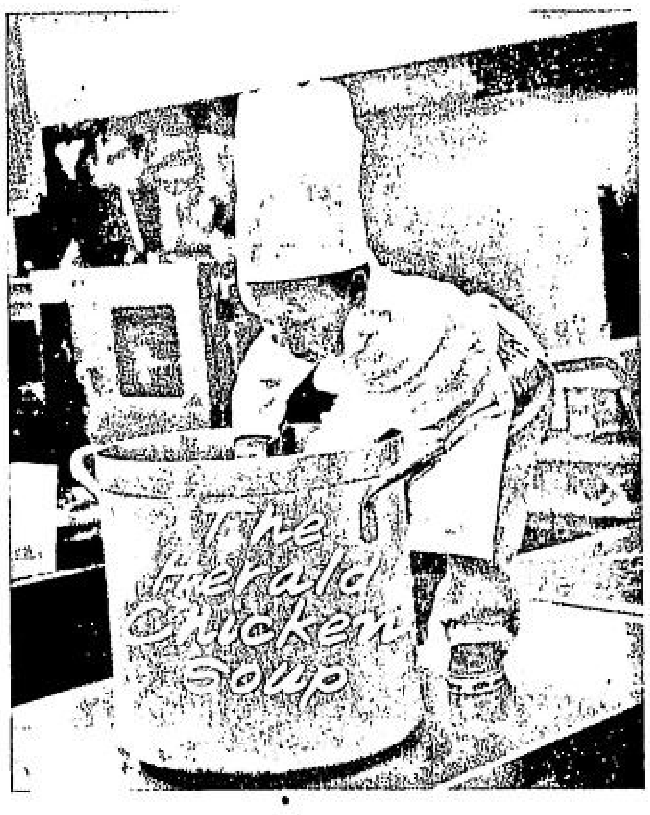
State Power Development Corp., a 210-megawatt coal-fired power plant with a projected investment cost of P19.5 billion, was one of the companies that signified interest to venture in the PIE-MO, along with San Miguel Beverage Packaging Specialist and San Miguel Foods.

Gabriel Evangelista, PIE-MO administrator, said the investment surge indicated the positive outlook of industries on the "desirability and profitability of doing business at the Phividec Industrial Estate."

"The good news is out there: Investors know we have the lowest land lease rates in the country and in Asia, we are strategically located and we have outstanding facilities. Our investment incentives and benefits are likewise very competitive so investors are realizing there are more and more reasons to pour in their money here," Evangelista said.

PIE-MO is a 3,000-ha industrial estate managed and operated by Phividec Industrial Authority.

With five industrial parks, the PIE-MO is home to the Mindanao Container Terminal Project, the 100-hectare Cagayan de Oro Business Park and the 150-hectare Philippines Sinter Corp. *PDI Mindanao Bureau*



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Bayantrade acquires tech firm

By Ronnel W. Domingo

E-SERVICES provider BayanTrade has recently acquired the professional services division of T-Systems ITC Philippines Inc.

Company president Dante Briones said in a statement that the acquisition enhanced BayanTrade's ability to implement, integrate, and support the whole suite of SAP solutions.

These solutions are meant to cover all stages of the supply chain—from planning, supplier sourcing, materials management, managing internal operations to meeting customer requirements on time.

Briones explained that supply chain management (SCM) was focused on integrating and organizing company end-to-end processes—from the flow of information involved in making that first supply sourcing through the delivery of goods and services to the customer.

He added that the SCM included such critical processes as sales and distribution planning, product and material requirements planning, inventory management, supplier relationship management, logistics and distribution operations, and customer relationship management.

"We acquired T-Systems' SAP consultants to form a strong team of specialists with deep functional skills in SAP," he said. "Their expertise complements our existing knowledge in sourcing and procurement, supplier relationship and supply chain management."

Briones said that prior to the acquisition, T-Systems was a subsidiary of Deutsche Telekom and was named twice as a preferred partner by SAP Philippines for its outstanding SAP project implementations.

T-Systems specialized in implementing SAP's financial, control, product planning, plant maintenance, materials management and sales and distribution modules.

BayanTrade is a regional business process outsourcing service provider focused on sourcing and procurement.

It helps companies improve sourcing and procurement processes by providing appropriate tools such as mySAP, SRM and SCM technologies.

"With this significant development, BayanTrade is now positioned to provide end-to-end supply chain management services as well as technology solutions," Briones said.

DOT to tap Chinese mart

DAVAO CITY—The Department of Tourism (DOT) has intensified its marketing and promotion drive by opening up two new offices in Beijing and Shanghai in anticipation of the growing Chinese market.

Tourism Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan said China was a very substantial market with a population of 1.3 billion.

"And it is projected that in the year 2020 the biggest number of tourists will be coming from China," he said during the recent Regional Tourism Council Assembly at the Apo View Hotel.

He said the DOT was also strengthening its agency in Europe, especially the offices in Paris, which will handle Italy and Southern part of Europe; London, for the United Kingdom and the Scandinavian countries; and in Frankfurt, to handle Germany and eastern Europe.

"We are targeting Europe where adventurist-tourists come from so we are maintaining our office in Paris although we are cutting costs," he said.

Pagdanganan said the aim was to promote the country as a major tourism destination to rival Thailand and Indonesia.

Last year, he said the country received 1.907 million foreign tourists. This year, the DOT hoped to increase the tourism arrivals to 2.2 million tourists, bringing in revenue of roughly P100 billion. *Joel Escovilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Wall Street investors to get cues from US Fed rate comments

NEW YORK—US stocks will take their cue from the Federal Reserve this week as investors look for indications that an interest rate hike will come in the next few months.

With the quarterly reporting season winding down, the Fed will take top billing when it meets on Tuesday to decide on interest-rate policy.

While it is expected to leave rates unchanged for now at a 1958 low of 1 percent, analysts say the Fed will begin to set the stage for a rate hike, which many are betting will come in August.

"Interest rates are going to have to come up," said Ozan Akcin, chief market strategist at Puglisi and Co. "Once it's done we'll probably see the volatility wash out. It's better to clear things up and have it done and over with, and have the markets adjust to a new situation with an environment of rising interest rates."

The market has lost some of its gains in recent weeks as strong economic data has prompted concerns that the Fed will raise rates in the next few months to cool off the economy and put the brakes on inflation.

The uncertainty about when the rate hike will come is weighing on the markets, analysts say.

"I'm still puzzled that the debate rages on concerning the actual date of Fed tightening," said Ned Riley, chief investment strategist at State Street Global Advisors, in a research note.

Strong earnings reports were not enough to prop up the market in the past week. The Nasdaq Composite index had its biggest weekly drop since April 2002. The Dow Jones industrial average and Standard & Poor's 500 index posted their biggest drops since early March.

Some analysts see stocks bouncing back.

"I think you're going to see a moderate recovery in the market next week," said Stanley Nabi, chair of SilverCrest Asset Management Group. "Now that we've gotten the profit figures and they are very comforting, I think the market will probably follow the profit figures and move up."

The pace of earnings slows considerably from the previous two weeks, in which more than half of the S&P 500 index companies posted results. Only about three dozen S&P companies will report their earnings in the week.

Reuters

Free-trade pacts to take spotlight at '04 Apec meet

SINGAPORE—Asia-Pacific leaders meeting in Chile this year are expected to discuss linking the mushrooming regional and bilateral free-trade pacts to help speed up the stalled global trade process, Chilean President Ricardo Lagos said Saturday.

He said leaders of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum need to consider the emergence of these arrangements and their significance in advancing the group's vision to achieve free and open trade by 2010 for industrialized members and 2020 for developing countries.

"I think that the time has come so that in this conference the leaders... can also take into account what's going on with regards to these bilateral trade agreements and to what extent a link can be established," Lagos told reporters during a visit to the Apec secretariat here.

Lagos said the proposal is for Apec economies which have forged free-trade accords to make a voluntary commitment to link these arrangements in order to come up with a wider grouping that would hopefully accelerate the multilateral trade process.

The multilateral trade process under the World Trade Organization (WTO) has stalled due to bitter disagreements between developed and developing countries over farm subsidies and other issues.

Apec trade ministers meeting in Chile in June ahead of the November leaders summit are likely to discuss ways to jumpstart the WTO talks on a so-called development agenda cobbled at a ministerial meeting in Doha, Qatar in 2001.

Lagos said part of the discussions by the trade ministers would be "to what extent we can use the bilateral agreements of different economies" to play a role in re-starting the global free-trade negotiations.

Chile, where trade accounts for 60 percent of the economy, has been a leading proponent of bilateral free-trade arrangements in Latin America.

It has signed such pacts with Mexico, Canada, the European Union, South Korea, European Free Trade Association and the United States.

Singapore, the champion of free-trade pacts in Asia, has also signed such accords with its major trading partners Australia, the United States, Japan and New Zealand.

AFP

Women-run small firms set the pace

WASHINGTON—Companies owned by women are growing at double the rate of all small businesses in the nation, spending $550 billion annually on payroll and benefits, according to figures released recently by a research group.

This year, women own a 50 percent or larger stake in 10.6 million privately held companies, the Center for Women's Business Research said. This is almost 48 percent of the country's privately held businesses.

Companies owned by women have $2.46 trillion in sales and employ more than 19 million people nationwide, according to the latest data from the center, which is based in Washington.

The No. 1 state in 2004 for companies owned by women was California, followed by Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois and Ohio. The rankings were based on a combination of factors.

In numbers of companies, "We estimate that women-owned firms are growing at close to twice the rate of all privately held firms, 17 percent versus 9 percent," said Myra M. Hart, a Harvard Business School professor and chairwoman of the center.

"These businesses are a critical component of the economy, not only in terms of their influence, but also in terms of their economic impact," she said.

That impact is often little noticed, said Deborah Davis, 41, who owns four dry cleaners in the Los Angeles area called "Cleaner By Nature."

"It's happened so fast," said Davis, who has 18 employees. "When I was born, women didn't usually own their own businesses. It's a tremendous change in one generation."

Also, said Davis, "Women often find niches in the marketplace where men aren't, so they don't have as high a profile."

The study estimated that employment at companies owned by women increased 24 percent in the last seven years, compared with 12 percent at all privately owned firms.

"There is a perception that women-owned businesses are smaller," said Nina McLemore, who runs a women's executive clothing business in New York. Compared with businesses owned by men, she said, "Yes, they are still a bit smaller, but not significantly so, and they don't stay smaller."

When McLemore opened her business 13 months ago, she worked alone. It now employs 13 people.

In its first year, her company had $1.5 million in revenue, reflecting another trend noted in the study: Estimated revenue for companies owned by women is increasing rapidly.

Since 1997, revenue at companies owned by women has risen 39 percent, compared with 34 percent for all privately owned companies.

New York Times

Europe should rethink position in IMF

WASHINGTON—Former International Monetary Fund managing director Horst Koehler said Europe should rethink its representation on the IMF's board, touching on a topic that would give developing countries more say in the fund's management.

"I do see scope for some adjustment in voting shares," Koehler told an International Monetary Fund publication to be published on Monday.

"I also think that Europe, in a bold political gesture, could rethink its own representation," he added.

Emerging market nations from Latin American, Asia and Africa have complained they are poorly represented on the IMF's 24-seat board, heavily weighted toward Europe, which has 10 seats, compared to Africa, which only has two seats.

Subscription, or quotas, which generate most of the fund's cash and determine its lending capacity, are assigned to each of the 184 member countries based on their size in proportion to the global economy.

At the end of 2003, quotas totaled $316 billion.

Koehler, who resigned as managing director on March 4 to bid for the German presidency, said an adjustment of voting shares would favor smaller, low-income countries and raise the profile of fast-growing emerging market nations "whose quotas no longer reflect their true weight in the world economy."

He also suggested European countries were considering consolidating their representation in the IMF.

"This is an issue for the Europeans to decide. The draft European Constitution does go in that direction. Personally, I support a vision of an even closer political union in Europe, and consolidating EU chairs in the IMF's executive board would be consistent with that vision," he said.

Emerging market countries have sought a change in the IMF's voting procedures in recent years and have questioned why the head of the IMF has always been European.

Since Koehler's departure the subject has generated renewed debate, with Europe clinging to the long custom and developing countries plus Russia and Australia charging that the process is outdated and should not be based on nationality.

Rodrigo Rato, Spain's former economy minister, is widely expected to be named the new managing director on Tuesday.

But Koehler said he saw no reason why the selection process should not be changed.

Reuters

US consumers subdued in April

NEW YORK—Midwest factories boomed in April at a clip that suggested a turnaround in manufacturing employment may be in the offing, a report showed on Friday.

Another survey said consumer sentiment softened slightly in April, yet factory managers must have sensed ample demand since they stepped up output, marking a year of expansion.

"The reluctance to hire remains a problem but companies will have to step up hiring ... unless they want to risk losing customers," said Chris Low, chief economist at FTN Financial.

Perhaps because US consumers' confidence in the economy was shaky, they were surprisingly sparing with their money in March despite an increase in personal income.

But that did not prevent a sizable increase in business for Midwest manufacturers. The National Association of Purchasing Management-Chicago business barometer rose to 63.9 from 57.6 in March. Wall Street analysts had forecast a rise, but only to 60.4.

The NAPM-Chicago's jobs index rose to 50.9 from 49.2 in March, only the fifth time in about five years that the jobs component has been above 50.

"Every indicator is telling us that manufacturing is rebounding very strongly," said Key Mayland, chief economist at Clearview Economics.

Mayland suggested the jump in regional factory activity could herald a strong reading on nationwide industry data on Monday and perhaps the first inklings of a rebound in manufacturing employment.

For now, the jobs situation was still precarious, prompting the University of Michigan's April confidence gauge to slip to 94.2 from 95.8 in March.

Personal spending rose 0.4 percent in March, the US Commerce Department said, well below market expectations of a 0.7 percent gain, but much of the extra money spent was eaten up by price increases. Adjusted for inflation, spending advanced a meager 0.1 percent.

Still, growth in spending for the prior two months was revised upward, which would explain a robust 4.2 percent first quarter growth rate reported on Thursday.

"If you look at personal income compared to where it was a year ago, it's up 4.9 percent, and that's quite a bit more than inflation," said Patrick Fearon, economist at A.G. Edwards & Sons. "That suggests that consumers have increased purchasing power compared with last year."

Reuters

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Cottonwood Heights, Antipolo, Rizal

Lot Size	Price	DP	Monthly
212sqm.	P975.200 00	P97.520 00	P12.090 40
216sqm.	P950,400 00	P95.040.00	P11,782 58
242sqm.	P1,064,800 00	P106,480 00	P13.200 86
304sqm.	P1,276,800 00	P127,680 00	P15,829 13
325sqm.	P1.579.000.00	P157,900 00	P19,575.65
359sqm.	P1.364,200 00	P136,420 00	P16,912 67
376sqm.	P1.579,000 00	P157.900 00	P19.575 65
413sqm.	P1,734.600 00	P173,460 00	P21,504 71
459sqm.	P1,744,200 00	P174,420 00	P21,623.72

Foliage Hills, Antipolo, Rizal

Lot Size	Price	DP	Monthly
178sqm.	P783.000 00	P78.300 00	P9,707.24
184sqm.	P809,600 00	P80 960 00	P10,037.02
187sqm.	P822.800 00	P82.280.00	P10.200 66
202sqm.	P888.000 00	P88 800 00	P11,008 98
216sqm.	P864.000 00	P86,400 00	P10,711.44
240sqm.	P1.056.000 00	P105,600.00	P13.091.76
282sqm.	P800,800 00	P80.080 00	P9,927.92

Hills of Maia Alta, Antipolo, Rizal

Lot Size	Price	DP	Monthly
153sqm	P627,300 00	P62.730 00	P7.776 95
178sqm.	P783.200 00	P78.320 00	P9,709.72
170sqm.	P748 000 00	P74,800 00	P9 273 33
204sqm	P897.600 00	P89 760 00	P11,128 00
230sqm.	P943,000 00	P94.300 00	P11,690 84
253sqm.	P1,037,300 00	P103,730 00	P12.859 93
306sqm.	P1,193,400 00	P119 340 00	P14,795 18
326sqm.	P1,238,800 00	P123 880 00	P15,358 02
346sqm.	P1,349 400 00	P134 940 00	P16,729 19
357sqm.	P1.356,600 00	P135.650 00	P16,818 45

Town & Country Estate, Antipolo, Rizal

Lot Size	Price	DP	Monthly
834sqm.	P3 170,000 00	P317.000.00	P39,300 08
1150sqm.	P4.374,000 00	P437 400.00	P54,226 67

Barrington Place, Antipolo, Rizal

Lot Size	Price	DP	Monthly
350sqm.	P1,435,000 00	P143,500.00	P17,790 42

Forest Hills, Antipolo, Rizal

Lot Size	Price	DP	Monthly
366sqm.	P1.098,000.00	P109.800 00	P13,612 46

Village East Executive Homes, Antipolo, Rizal

Lot Size	Price	DP	Monthly
137sqm.	P2,735,000 00	P273,000 00	P33,907 17

Manila Southwood Residential Estate, Carmona

Lot Size	Price	DP	Monthly
470sqm.	P2,350,000 00	P235 000.00	P29,134.13
486sqm.	P2 430 000 00	P243 000 00	P30,125 93
534sqm.	P2,670,000.00	P267 000 00	P33,101 30
612sqm.	P3,060 000 00	P306 000 00	P37.936 36
1000sqm.	P5,000,000 00	P500,000 00	P61,987 50

RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUM

Biltmore Tower, Legaspi Village, Makati.

Unit Size	Price	DP	Monthly
72 4sqm.	P4 409.160 00	P440.916 00	P54,662 57
81 5sqm.	P4,979,650 00	P497,965.00	P61,735 22
82 6sqm	P5,046,860 00	P504 686 00	P62,568 45
131 1sqm.	P8,416,620 00	P841,662 00	P104,345 06

Palm Tower, St. Paul St. San Antonio Village, Makati

Unit Size	Price	DP	Monthly
24 48sqm.	P859,248.00	P85 924 80	P10,652 53
36 36sqm	P1,210,788 00	P121.078 80	P15,010 75
36 36sqm.	P1,276 236 00	P127 623 60	P15.822 14
36 36sqm	P1,338 048 00	P133 604 80	P16.588 45
36 36sqm.	P1,403,496 00	P140,349 60	P17,399 84
42 65sqm	P1,415,980.00	P141,598 00	P17.554 61
36.54sqm	P1,477.264.00	P147.726 40	P18.314 38
43 20sqm.	P1.516.320 00	P151.632.00	P18,798 58
52 54sqm.	P1,838.900.00	P183.890 00	P22,797 76
65 00sqm.	P2.509.000 00	P250.900 00	P31,105 33
74 40sqm	P2,834.147.35	P284,314.74	P35 247.92
75 39sqm.	P2.892.185 50	P289,218.55	P35.855 87
87 67sqm	P2.919.411.00	P291.941.10	P36.193 40
87.67sqm	P3.068 450 00	P306 845 00	P38 041.11
87.67sqm	P3.068.450.00	P306 845 00	P38 041.11
107 04sqm	P3,553,728 00	P355.372 80	P44,057 35
107 04sqm	P3.371,760 00	P337,176 00	P41,801.40
101.97sqm.	P3.548.556 00	P354.855 60	P43.993 23
101 97sqm.	P3,385 404 00	P338,540 40	P41,970 55
98 43sqm	P3,592.695.00	P359,269 50	P44,540.44

Ark Condominium, Sierra Madre st., Mandaluyong

Unit Size	Price	DP	Monthly
21.85sqm	P445,740 00	P44 574 00	P5,526 06
47 83sqm	P1.090 524 00	P109.052 40	P13.519 77
65 33sqm	P1,489 524 00	P148 952 40	P18,466 38
125 46sqm.	P2,998 494 00	P299,849 40	P37,173 83

Chateau de Baie, Roxas Blvd.

Unit Size	Price	DP	Monthly
157sqm.	P4,025 000 00	P402,500 00	P49.899 95
184sqm.	P4,625,000 00	P462,500 00	P57,338 45

RESIDENTIAL TOWN HOUSE

Isabella Place, Hobart Subdivision, Fairview, Q.C.

Unit Size	Price	DP	Monthly
85sqm	P1,869 265 00	P186.826 50	P23,161 82
87sqm.	P2,002 482 00	P200,248 20	P24.825.78
146sqm.	P2,702,915.00	P270,291.50	P33,509.40

Dionisio Royale Executive Homes, Greenville Subdivision,Q.C

Unit Size	Price	DP	Monthly
54sqm	P1,600 000.00	P160,000 00	P19,836 01

VJ Town House, Paranaque City

Unit Size	Price	DP	Monthly
226sqm	P2,600 000 00	P260 000 00	P32,233 51

OFFICE CONDOMINIUM

Palm Tower, St. Paul St. San Antonio Village, Makati

Unit Size	Price	DP	Monthly
16 16sqm	P496 112 00	P49,611 20	P6,150 55
17.40sqm	P534,180 00	P53 418 00	P6.622 50
18 96sqm	P606,720 00	P60 672 00	P7,521 81
22 25sqm	P712,000.00	P71,200 00	P8,827 02
32 56sqm	P1,041,920 00	P104,192 00	P12 917 20
48 26sqm.	P1,409,192.00	P140 919 20	P17,470 46
51.10sqm	P1,492,120 00	P149 212 00	P18 498 56
58 10sqm	P1 766 240 00	P176 624 00	P21 896 96
66.00sqm	P1,927,200 00	P192,720 00	P23,892 46
103sqm.	P3,021,616.00	P302,161 60	P37,460 49

Atlanta Center

Unit Size	Price	DP	Monthly
76 57sqm.	P3,040,578 00	P304 057 00	P37 695 57
89.67sqm	P3,504 318 00	P350 431 80	P43 444 79
95 83sqm	P3,722 382 00	P372 238 20	P46.148 23
158 02sqm	P6 980 800 00	P698 080 00	P86 544 48
112 44sqm.	P4.613 964 00	P461,396 40	P57,201 62
137 15sqm	P5,816,000 00	P581,600 00	P72,103 87
157 24sqm	P6,305 120 00	P630 512 00	P78,167 73
158 79sqm	P6 894 020 00	P689 402 00	P85,468 62
157 19sqm	P7,147 600 00	P714.760 00	P88,612 38
159 88sqm	P7.558 972 00	P755 897 20	P93,712 36
171 21sqm	P8 480 820 10	P848,082 00	P105,140.97

Gold Hill Tower Condominium

Unit Size	Price	DP	Monthly
289sqm	P13,120,000 00	P1,312,000 00	P162 655 22
442sqm	P20,313,000 00	P2,031,300 00	P251,830 44

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US Fed meeting, jobs data loom large this week

NEW YORK—US Treasury investors will be able to indulge their twin obsessions with jobs and monetary policy this week when the Federal Reserve meets and the April employment report is published, making for choppy trade.

"The coming days will provide a lot of information regarding the state of Fed thinking and the state of the economy. How closely the two match will prove a key determinant in the market's reaction to events," wrote Lehman Brothers senior financial economist Drew Matus in a report.

The Fed holds its third policy meeting of the year on Tuesday, the first after March's eye-opening payrolls report, but is not expected to make any change to interest rates.

However, investors will scour every word of the central bank's post-meeting statement to gauge policymakers' patience on the timing of the first rise in official interest rates and their view on the risk burgeoning inflation might pose.

"I think there is a very high likelihood that they will remove the word 'patient' from the text. But I think the market expects that, so it's not a new event. Will it react adversely?

"Maybe initially, but that's close to being priced in," said Merrill Lynch governments strategist John Spinello.

Recent Fed-speak has soothed some of the concern in the Treasury market that officials would favor a more hawkish approach to policy now there is evidence that inflation has picked up and hiring is running at a healthier pace.

The futures market continues to price in a 25 basis point rise in rates by August, based on the fed funds futures, with subsequent rises taking official interest rates to around 1.85 percent by the end of the year, little changed from the market's view at the start of the month.

Once the Fed's meeting is done, the market will have to contend with the April employment report, due on Friday.

Wall Street largely expects hiring to have slowed somewhat during April. But the bond market is primed for another aggressive sell-off if the payrolls figures exceed expectations for a second month in a row.

Economists have forecast a median rise of 175,000 in nonfarm payrolls in April, against March's 308,000 rise, while the unemployment rate is forecast to hold at 5.7 percent.

The damage that a strong payrolls number would inflict is most likely to be worse at the short-dated end of the curve, analysts said.

Yields on the two-year Treasury, the most sensitive to market thinking on where official rates will go, have hit their highest since July in the last month as investors have become increasingly wary of rate rises.

But any unwinding of the so-called "curve trade"—where investors have borrowed short-dated maturities to finance lending further out at higher rates—would most likely result in a cushion of support for the longer end of the market, analysts said.

"If we were to get to or exceed 4.65 percent (on 10-year notes) which was the high in yield in last summer's sell-off and there's no perceived buying at that point it could be detrimental if the number is a stronger payrolls number," said Merrill's Spinello.

"If that happens, we'll probably get a more adverse reaction at the front end and that would give some stability to the back end and give it something of an artificial bid."

The benchmark 10-year note is currently holding around 4.50 percent, and has risen by some 75 basis points over the course of April, since the March payrolls report. *Reuters*

EU business confidence firms up

BRUSSELS—Eurozone business leaders are feeling better about the near future these days, thanks largely to a weaker euro, but overall growth in the region is likely to be modest given consumer unease over job prospects.

Surveys conducted by the European Union's executive commission showed Friday that the corporate confidence level in the 12-nation eurozone improved sharply in April while consumer sentiment revealed no significant gains.

The results were hailed by a spokesman for European Economic Affairs Commissioner Joaquin Almunia.

If the confidence index continues to climb in May, "we can then say that the risks of a growth slowdown are starting to disappear," said spokesman Gerassimos Thomas.

The commission foresees eurozone growth this year of 1.7 percent, although Germany—the largest economy using the single currency—is predicted to grow just 1.5 percent, Berlin said Friday, lowering its previous forecast of 1.7 percent.

"A restoration in business confidence is a positive factor, linked to a correction in the exchange rate of the euro, which has come as a breath of fresh air for business," said analyst Florence Beranger of CCD-Ixis.

Added Jean-Francois Mercier of Citigroup: "The commission survey is consistent with stable growth in the first half but also points to encouraging signs in the second thanks to a correction in the euro that has boosted the business competitiveness."

After having surged to a record $1.2929 on Feb. 18, the euro has fallen substantially and was trading Friday at $1.19.

Eurozone politicians and business leaders had complained bitterly when the euro soared, fearing that less competitive exports would snuff out an overall recovery.

Supported by export earnings but in the continued absence of strong domestic demand, eurozone growth should be "modest" this year at around 1.4 to 1.5 percent, according to Beranger.

"Consumers are still anxious about unemployment," she said, with a 9.8 percent French jobless rate underscoring concerns.

The commission determined that consumer interest in purchasing houses, cars and appliances has stagnated. In Germany, for example, retail sales fell 2.2 percent in first quarter 2004. *AFP*

Google to go public in $2.7-B offering

SAN FRANCISCO—Google Inc., whose name is synonymous with Internet searches, said last week it planned to go public by selling $2.7 billion in stock through a novel online auction in the most-anticipated Internet IPO since Netscape in 1995.

The planned initial public offering promised to enrich the founders and early backers of the unconventional six-year-old company, which posted revenue of almost $1 billion last year.

It also set the stage for a new round of competition for Internet advertising dollars between Google and deep-pocketed rivals Microsoft Corp. and Yahoo Inc.

In keeping with Google's quirky culture, co-founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page promised in an "owners manual" for prospective investors that its debut as a public company would not change its culture. In doing so, they repeated the company mantra: "Don't Be Evil."

"Google is not a conventional company. We do not intend to become one," they said, noting that investors could be in for a bumpy ride because they have no intention of smoothing results to match Wall Street expectations and would continue to invest in high-risk, high reward projects.

Google did not provide details on the pricing or expected listing date for its shares, but said they would be sold through an auction designed to even the playing field for smaller investors and "minimize" the "boom-bust cycles" that have characterized other IPOs.

The listing by Google, which survived and prospered through the dot-com shakeout along with companies such as Yahoo and eBay Inc., has been seen as a positive sign for venture capital investors and the IPO market, now recovering from a slump of more than three years.

"Whatever the structure, it's a great company and lots of people are interested," said Benjamin Howe, founding partner of America's Growth Capital in Boston, estimating that shares could be priced before the July 4 US holiday.

Mountain View, California-based Google said it would seek to list either on the Nasdaq Stock Market Inc. market or on the New York Stock Exchange.

Morgan Stanley and Credit Suisse First Boston were named as lead underwriters for the offering, which has been expected to generate fees of up to $100 million for investment bankers. *Reuters*

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Newsdealers Day 2004

PDI and IPI
NEWSDEALERS' DAY

HAPPINESS and excitement are painted in the faces of newsdealers as they get ready for a day of fun, games and fellowship in the much-awaited annual celebration of Newsdealers Day at the Clark Fontana Leisure Park April 19 and 20. The Philippine Daily Inquirer and Inquirer Publications Inc circulation teams were present to welcome the newsdealers.

INQUIRER field coordinator Resty Lee leads Pasig Newsdealer Emma Maka to the registration area upon her arrival at the Clark Fontana Leisure Park. Others who welcomed her are the staff of both PDI Circulation and CFLP led by sales director Chat Gabriel (center, in white).

NEWSDEALERS are all smiles as they receive their minor prizes of P2,000 each. Shown are (from left, front row) Charo Lising, Artemio Gaboy, Lourdes Flores, Nenita Guisihan, Zenaida Sano and Andres Burtanog, (from left, second row) Judy Javier, Randy de Leon, Virgilio Villota, Bonifacio Javier, Manny Gonzales, Rudy Peleno and Raul Adan.

OTHER minor cash prizes of P1,000 each include (from left) Calixto Llamas, Ermilando Galos, Sammy Navarro, Ms Corro, Gloria Manuel, Ms Ycasiano, Emma Earnhart and James Hao.

THE PDI-IPI Circulation team strikes a pose before breakfast at the Fontana Convention Center. Shown are Resty Lee, Bong Viray, Helen Poblete, Ruby dela Cruz, Ellen Precilla, Aira Pozon, Ellaine Calzado, Roy Mendiola, Regie Delgado, Karen Garcia, Olive Pozon, Raymond Rivera and Wacks Zacarias.

NEWSDEALERS huddle with Inquirer circulation manager for sales and promotions Bien Baltazar (in red) discussing the future of the Inquirer during breakfast. Also shown are Ms Gubisch, Allan Earnhart Mr and Ms Lerios and Ms Bengzon.

NEWSDEALERS Jet Aidasani and James Hao are in deep thought during chess competitions as Inquirer SVP for sales and marketing Rene Reinoso looks on.

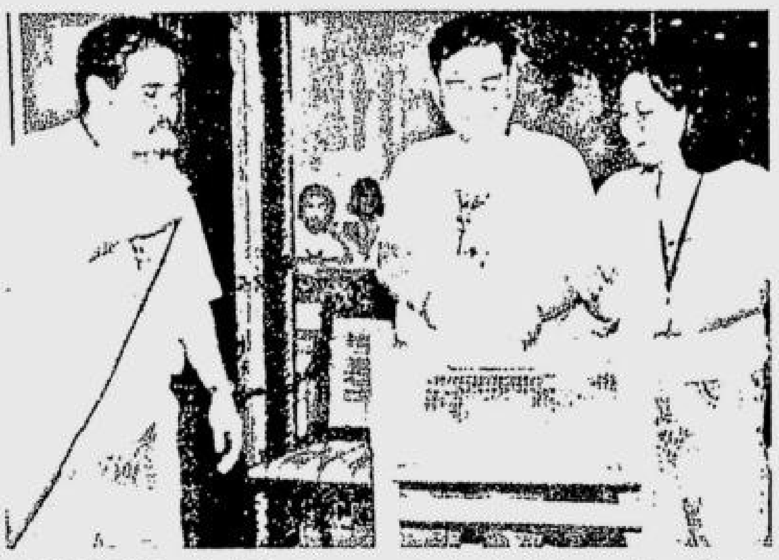
INQUIRER SVP for corporate services Dave Valdes awards one of the raffle prizes to Bicol Region's newsdealer Salve Galvan.

MABUH
PDI and IP
WSDEALERS
Greetings from: INQUIRER
• TUMBOK
• INQUIRER
• SOUTH EXP
2004

REINOSO congratulates grand raffle winner and chess tournament champ Jet Aidasani during the awarding ceremonies held at the Convention Center.

IPI president and Inquirer director Dennis Valdes is all smiles as he awards a P10,000 cash prize to Mr Malacad during fellowship night at the Fontana Session Hall.

IN BEHALF of the association, NMC-DAP representative Cely Suyat expresses her gratitude for the support Inquirer has extended to all newsdealers during fellowship night at the Fontana Session Hall.



INQUIRER AVP for circulation Glo Lardizabal and Inquirer provincial manager Rene Langahin assist Inquirer SVP for advertising Pepito Olarte in drawing the third prize winner. Olarte also thanked the newsdealers for their help in the advertising team's attainment of their sales targets.

NEWSDEALERS prepare to start the basketball tournament eventually won by the Blue team. Assisting is IPI sales coordinator Roy Mendiola (left).

REINOSO and Lardizabal welcome the newsdealers as they arrive at the Fontana Fun Park for lunch. Close to 300 newsdealers nationwide attended the much-awaited annual summer treat of the Inquirer.

MAE AY!
PDI
NEWSDEAL DA
Greetings from
• BANDERA
• INQ7.NET
• ON THE ROAD
APRIL 19-20, 20

REINOSO cites the newsdealers' significant role as a mutual partner and provider of news and information before announcing the grand raffle winner together with Baltazar.

NEWSDEALERS try out the latest sports craze during the badminton tournament held at the sports center.

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Lot 2 – Resd'l. Lot, LA 492 sqm
L22 B26 Bayabas St., Amparo Subd.
Minimum Bid Price P 865,920

CAVITE

Resd' Lots, Orchard Subd, Dasmarinas
Lot 3 – L25 B37, LA 648 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 1,814,400
Lot 4 – L50 B37, LA 670 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 1,876,000
Lot 5 – L5 B39, LA 581 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 1,626,800

LAGUNA

Lot 6 – Com'l w/ Imprvmnt, FA 419 sqm
J P. Rizal St., Poblacion, Cabuyao
Minimum Bid Price P 4,088,250

Resd'l Lots, La Residencia de Sta. Rosa
Lot 7 – L8 Rd., L6, LA 180 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 945,000
Lot 8 – L9 Rd., L6, LA 180 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 945,000

Lot 9 – Resd'l, Lot, LA 164 sqm
L54 B27 New York St,Town &Country Southville Ph1, Brgy. Calaboso, Biñan
Minimum Bid Price P 415,440

Resd'l Lots, San Lorenzo South Annex Phase1, Sta. Rosa
Lot 10 – L36 B3 Ph1-C, LA 121 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 359,975
Lot 11 – L37 B3 Ph1-C, LA 95 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 282,625
Lot 12 – L38 B3 Ph1-C, LA 131 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 389,725
Lot 13 – L17 B2 Ph1-C, LA 114 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 339,150
Lot 14 – L35 B3 Ph1-C, LA 154 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 458,150

LAS PIÑAS

Resd'l Lots BF Homes, Pilar Executive Village, Phase 6
Lot 15 – L4 B7 SE cor of rd L6A & 7A LA 507sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 1,870,222
Lot 16 – L2 B7 east side of rd L6A, LA 646 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 2,268,752

Lot 17 – Comm'l. w/ Imprvmnt, FA 500 sqm Piazza Bianca-BF Resort Village Phase 1, Talon Dos
Minimum Bid Price P 10,178,743

Lot 18 – Comm'l w/ Imprvmnt, FA 638 sqm Chelanz Plaza, G. Diaz & Lalaine St., BF Resort Village, Brgy. Pamplona
Minimum Bid Price P 11,070,771

Lot 19 – Resd'l. w/ Imprvmnt, FA 240 sqm, No. 5 Blk27, Alice Crisostomo St BF Resort Vill, Talon Dos
Minimum Bid Price P 1,517,400

Lot 20 – Resd'l w/ Imprvmnt, FA 300 sqm, L12 Blk19 San Francisco St.,Pamplona Metrocor Homes Area B, Talon 5
Minimum Bid Price P 1,428,300

MALABON

Lot 21 – Resd'l Condo, FA 137.25 sqm #12 Yellow Bell St., Araneta University Village, Brgy. Potrero
Minimum Bid Price P 1,633,063

MANDALUYONG

Lot 22 – Resd'l. Condo,FA165 sqm Unit 1006A, Wack-Wack Twin Towers, Wack-Wack Road
Minimum Bid Price P 5,239,575

Commc'l Condo. Paragon Plaza Condo. EDSA cor Reliance St.
Lot 23 – Unit 1204, FA 221.62
Minimum Bid Price P 6,698,600
Lot 24 – Unit 1205, FA 221.48 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 6,694,400
Lot 25 – Unit1206, FA 208 50
Minimum Bid Price P 6,280,000

MANILA

Lot 26 – Resd'l. Twnhse,FA 162.35 Sta. Ana Villas Townhomes, #2215 Pedro Gil St., Sta. Ana
Minimum Bid Price P 3,449,938

Lot 27 – Resd'l. Condo,FA 22.81 sqm Unit 4, 5/F Bayfront Tower, Mabini St.
Minimum Bid Price P 775,200

MARIKINA

Lot 28 – Resd'l w/ Imprvmnt, FA 494 sqm L19 Blk 16, Madrid cor Copenhagen Sts., Provident Village
Minimum Bid Price P 4,028,000

Lot 29 – 3 Resd'l Twnhse, FA 104 sqm Ph1-B Unit 18 Balana Townhouse 1 Condo., #2 Katipunan St., Concepcion 2
Minimum Bid Price P 863,281

Lot 30 – Resd'l. Lot, FA 900 sqm #10 (3 adjacent lots) along the SW side of Monserrat Hill St., Ph2, La Milagrosa Subd. Marikina Heights, Brgy Bayanbayanan
Minimum Bid Price P 2,417,825

MUNTINLUPA

Lot 31 – Resd'l w/ Imprvmnt FA 100 sqm #307 Third St., Patio Homes, Posadas Village, Sucat
Minimum Bid Price P 1,817,691

Lot 32 – Resd'l Lot FA 300 sqm L11 Blk35 Lavander St., South Greenheights Subd., Brgy. Putatan
Minimum Bid Price P 892,500

PARAÑAQUE

Resd'l Condo. Chateau De Baie Condo, Roxas Blvd. cor Airport Road
Lot 33 – Unit #1404, FA185 87sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 4,739,685
Lot 34 – Unit #1605, FA185 87sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 4,739,685
Lot 35 – Unit #1705, FA185 87sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 5,055,800

Lot 36 – Resd'l w/ Imprvmnt, FA 800 sqm #61 Peter St., Multinational Village, Brgy. La Huerta
Minimum Bid Price P 7,270,400

Lot 37 – Resd'l w/ Imprvmnt, FA 367 50 sqm, #13-15 Teheran St., Multinational Village Phase 2
Minimum Bid Price P 2,624,000

Lot 38 – Resd'l w/ Imprvent, FA 258 sqm #27 Bloodstone St., Severina Diamond Subd., Brgy. San Antonio
Minimum Bid Price P 1,591,500

Lot 39 – Resd'l Lot, LA 632 sqm L15 Blk3 Cypress St., Marcelo Green Vill.
Minimum Bid Price P 2,780,800

Lot 40 – Resd'l Twnhse, FA 155sqm Unit 1, St. Louis Townhouse II, St. Simon St., Don Bosco Village, Brgy. Don Bosco
Minimum Bid Price P 2,040,000

Lot 41 – Resd'l w/ Imprvmnt,FA193sqm #139 Elm Loop St., Maywood Vill. 2, Brgy. San Dionisio (now Brgy. Marcelo)
Minimum Bid Price P 1,197,000

Resd'l Condo. Washington Tower, Asiaworld Complex, Tambo
Lot 42 – Unit 16-B, FA333.2 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 10,389,567
Lot 43 – Unit 16-C, FA 347 67 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 10,824,354

Resd'l Condo., Makati South Hills Arcade, East Service Road, Bo. Balagbag
Lot 44 – Unit 302, FA107.35sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 1,824,950
Lot 45 – Unit 301, FA136 31sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 2,317,270

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Lot 46 – Resd'l w Imprvmnt, FA 524 sqm 2040 Decena St., Brgy. San Rafael
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Lot 47 – Resd'l Condo, FA 180 14 sqm Unit 1802 Renaissance Towers 2000, Meralco Ave
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Lot 49 – Resd'l Condo, FA 80 sqm Unit 803 8/F Union Square One Condo. #145, 15th Ave., Cubao
Minimum Bid Price P 2,040,000

Resd'l Townhouse, Capitol Golf Townhomes & Golfers Villas, Capitol Hills
Lot 50 – Unit 12, FA 230 81
Minimum Bid Price P 4,154,580
Lot 51 – Unit 13, FA 230 61
Minimum Bid Price P 4,150,980
Lot 52 – Unit 14, FA 230 61
Minimum Bid Price P 4,064,501

Lot 53 – Resd'l Twnhse, FA 123 sqm #1 West Road St., St. Judee Luxury Homes, Tandang Sora
Minimum Bid Price P 1,971,200

Lot 54 – Resd'l Twnhse, FA 66 sqm Unit 6 Don Guillermo Townhouse, Don Guillermo St.,Brgy. Holy Spirit
Minimum Bid Price P 1,822,125

Lot 55 – Resd'l w/Imprvmnt, FA 1,493 sqm #20 N. Domingo St
Minimum Bid Price P 24,063,440

Lot 56 – Resd'l. w/ Imprvmnt, FA 924 sqm 22 Rose Alvero St., Xavierville Subd. II, Loyola Heights
Minimum Bid Price P 16,440,700

Lot 57 – Resd'l Twnhse, FA 73 sqm Unit 7 Serra Monte Villas, Zeus St., Filinvest II Subd., Brgy. Batasan Hills
Minimum Bid Price P 1,320,000

Lot 58 – Resd'l Twnhse, FA 147 97 sqm Unit 2 Type B3 Mariposa Townhouse #18 Mariposa St., Cubao
Minimum Bid Price P 3,462,300

Lot 59 – Resd'l w/ Imprvmnt FA 260 sqm L16, St. Louie Compound 6, Baesa
Minimum Bid Price P 1,465,929

Resd' Condo. Tempus Place Condo 2, Makatarungan St., Brgy Central Diliman
Lot 60 – Unit 5-F, FA60.84sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 1,232,010
Lot 61 – Unit 5-C, FA 69.76 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 1,412,640
Lot 62 – Unit 5-B, FA 56 50 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 1,144,125

Lot 63 – Resd'l Condo ,FA 44 sqm Unit 610 Prince Jun Condo., Timog Ave
Minimum Bid Price P 1,196,800

Lot 64 – Resd'l. w/ Imprvmnt FA 372 sqm Along the NW side of Road Towerville Homes, Brgy. Culiat
Minimum Bid Price P 4,236,560

Lot 65 – Resd'l w/ Imprvmnt FA 77 sqm Along the East side of Road Towerville Homes, Brgy. Culiat
Minimum Bid Price P 1,653,876

Lot 66 – Resd'l Lot, FA 751 sqm L28 29 Blk121 Villa Vienna Neopolitan Subd. Pasong Putik, Novaliches
Minimum Bid Price P 2,703,600

Lot 67 – Resd'l. w/ Imprvmnt FA 300 sqm #41 along SW side of 11th Ave, L19 Brgy. Socorro, Cubao
Minimum Bid Price P 3,876,114

Lot 68 – Resd'l. w/ Imprvmnt FA 204 sqm #11 Lanzones St., Ph 2A, Northview Subd., Matandang Balara
Minimum Bid Price P 1,515,331

Lot 69 – Resd'l. w/ Imprvmnt FA 408 sqm L10 Blk3 Osmeña St., T.S. Cruz Subd., Novaliches
Minimum Bid Price P 1,358,640

RIZAL

Lot 70 – Resd'l w. Imprvmnt, FA 790 sqm L5 B5 SE of 2nd St., Cavalier Village, Sta. Cruz, Antipolo City
Minimum Bid Price P 3,232,550

Lot 71 – Resd'l. Lot, LA 211 sqm L3 B14 Apo St., Town & Country Hills, Brgy. Inarawan, Antipolo City
Minimum Bid Price P 573,920

Resd'l Lots, Village East 3, Angono
Lot 72 – L43 B62-A, LA 204 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 433,500
Lot 73 – L45 B62-A, LA 204sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 433,500
Lot 74 – L47 B62-A, LA 204 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 433,500
Lot 75 – L54 B62-A, LA 204 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 433,500
Lot 76 – L25 B21-A, LA 204 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 433,500

Lot 77 – Resd'l. w/ Imprvmnt, FA 222 sqm L5 Blk10 Saragossa St., Vista Verde Exec. Village Phase 1, Cainta
Minimum Bid Price P 1,623,703

SAN JUAN

Lot 78 – Resd'l Condo, FA 333 03 sqm Unit 201 & 202 Cypress Mansion Condo Bldg., #352 P. Guevarra St.
Minimum Bid Price P 6,408,496

Lot 79 – Resd'l Condo, FA 276 20 sqm Unit 507 5/F Continental Court, #47 Annapolis St., Greenhills
Minimum Bid Price P 7,320,600

TAGUIG

Lot 80 – Resd'l w. Imprvmnt FA 360 sqm L3 & 4 Blk 4 Sto. Niño St. Holy Family Village, Brgy. Bagumbayan
Minimum Bid Price P 1,836,800

VALENZUELA

Lot 81 – Resd'l Lot LA 539 sqm L4-B-2-E Tomasa St., Brgy. Parada
Minimum Bid Price P 1,212,750

Lot 82 – Resd'l w/Imprvmnt, FA1,000 sqm #3027 San Simeon St•near San Agustin Village, Mapulang Lupa
Minimum Bid Price P 1,792,738

Lot 83 – Resd'l w/ Imprvmnt FA192 sqm. 108Ramon St., Fortune Vill.4 Brgy. Parada
Minimum Bid Price P 1,978,560

Lot 84 – Resd'l Lot, FA 395 sqm. Vista Verde, Lawang Bato
Minimum Bid Price P 782,100

Lot 85 – Resd'l Twnhse, FA 65 sqm Unit 1137 L22 Blk2 Jade Townhomes & Condo, Don Pedro St. Marulas
Minimum Bid Price P 1,944,000

Lot 86 – Resd'l Twnhse, FA 58 5sqm L11 Blk5 Marble Villas, F. Bautista St Brgy. Ugong
Minimum Bid Price P 1,154,757

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MANILA

NR LA SALLE TAFT
Twnhse/3stry/3br/3tb/grge Bnew P4 490M up 8903461

MARIKINA

Bnew 4BR 3TB 2.7M 9487112

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H&L Bung BLS Annex 1618 3.8M Accepts Terms 8236212

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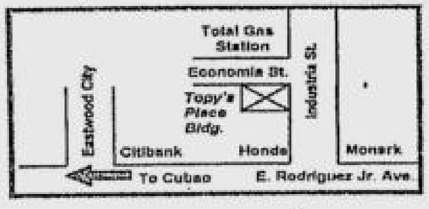

BOHOL I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Maca-as, Tubigon, Bohol
Tel. No. (038) 508-0085, 508-0084 and 2372-205
Fax No. (038) 508-8095

INVITATION FOR BIDS NO. 13

The BOHOL I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (BOHECO – 1) thru subsidy from the National Electrification Administration (NEA) and General fund from Boheco I intends to procure various electrical materials for Line extension and rehabilitations of distribution lines under its coverage area.
Supply and delivery of the following at BOHECO-I Main Office, Maca-as Tubigon, Bohol;

		QUANTITY	UNIT
Lot A	LINE HARDWARES		
A-1	Armor rod, # 1/0, 9/set	110	set
A-2	Anchore rod, threaded, Single eye, galvanized 5/8" x 7 fe	132	pcs.
A-3	Bolt, double arming, 5/8" x 18"	100	pcs.
A-4	Bolt, double arming, 5/8" x 24"	212	pcs.
A-5	Bolt, carriage, 3/8" x 4-1/2"	400	pcs.
A-6	Brace, crossarm, diagonal, steel, galvanized, 7ft long	20	pcs.
A-7	Brace, crossarm, steel 28" long	260	pcs.
A-8	Bracket secondary, angle	100	pcs.
A-9	Clamp, pole, CA type, 5" to 7"	55	pcs.
A-10	Clamp, pole, CA type, 9" to 10"	80	pcs
A-11	Clamp, pole, CA, type, 10" to 11"	30	pcs.
A-12	Clamp, pole, CA type, 11" to 12"	100	pcs.
A-13	Clevis, secondary swinging	200	pcs.
A-14	Connector, compression YHO2/YHO 150	3,000	pcs.
A-15	Connector, compression YPC2 A8U	5,000	pcs.
A-16	Connector, ground clamp 5/8"	300	pcs.
A-17	Crossarm steel galvanized 75mm x 100mmx2400mm	150	pcs
A-18	Crossarm steel galvanized 75mm x 100mmx3000mm	75	pcs.
A-17	Machine bolt, 1/2" x 14"	240	pcs.
A-18	Machine bolt, 5/8" x 14"	330	pcs.
A-19	Pin, crossarm long shank, 1" thread lead head, 5/8" x 14-3/4"	230	pcs.
A-20	Pin, pole top, channel, 1" thread lead, 20" long	480	pcs.
Lot B	LINE CONDUCTOR AND WIRES		
B-1	Conductor, Bare, ACSR #2 AWG	17,00	mtrs
B-2	Conductor, Bare, ACSR #4 AWG	15,500	mtrs
B-3	Conductor, Duplex, wire #6	150,000	mtrs
B-4	Guy wire, Galvanized steel, 3/8", 7 strand	13,000	feet
B-5	Wire grounding 5/16", 3 strand steel	13,000	feet
Lot C	LINE EQUIPMENT		
C-1	Fuse cutout, single shot, 15kv, 200 amp, brand new AB Chance	100	pcs.
C-2	Lightning Arrester, 15kv, US made, Brand new	120	pcs
C-3	Circuit Breaker, TQC-model 1, 2 pole, with enclosure, with incoming and outgoing cable glands.		
	GE40 amp	50	pcs.
	GE 60 amp	50	pcs.
C-4	Timer switch, Automatic, 100-240 VAC, 60Hz, 300 hrs back power battery, Model TB388	20	pcs.
C-5	Distribution transformer 10 kva, double bushing, 120/240 volts secondary, 7,620/13200 volts primary	4	pcs.
Lot D	LINE INSULATORS		
D-1	Insulators suspension, 6" clevis type	450	pcs.
D-2	Insulators, Pin type, Porcelain ANSI class 55-4 (big)	1000	pcs.

Opening of sealed bids will be on May 26, 2004, 10 AM at BOHECO-1 at its main office (Board Room) in Maca-As, Tubigon, Bohol. Said proposal would be open and read in the presence of bidders or their representative who choose to attend.

The interested bidders may obtain information secure list of various electrical materials and other bidding documents from BOHECO I Main Office upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One thousand and two hundred Pesos (P1,200.00).

(Sgd.) CARLOS B. ITABLE
General Manager

(PDI – May 3, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION

GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM
GSIS-Kahit Saan, Kahit Kailan Maasahan.

NOTICE

(Reinsurance of NAPOCOR Minor Policies)

In connection with the Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and To Bid for the reinsurance of National Power Corporation's minor policies, the amended schedule of bidding is as follows:

	ISSUANCE OF ELIGIBILITY & BID DOCUMENTS	PRE-BID CONFERENCE	SUBMISSION AND OPENING OF ELIGIBILITY AND BID ENVELOPES
Protection & Indemnity Cover	May 4 to 18, 2004 9:00 am-5:00 pm JBC Secretariat 7th Floor-EPDC Bldg., BSP Complex Roxas Blvd., Manila	May 5, 2004 2:00 pm Board Rm, 6th Floor DOF Building Roxas Blvd., Manila	May 20, 2004 2:00 pm Office of the Chairman Board Rm., 6th Floor DOF Building Roxas Blvd., Manila
Motor Car & Marine Open Policy	May 7 to 25, 2004 9:00 am-5:00 pm JBC Secretariat 7th Floor-EPDC Bldg., BSP Complex Roxas Blvd., Manila	May 12, 2004 2:00 pm Board Rm., 6th Floor DOF Building Roxas Blvd., Manila	May 27, 2004 2:00 pm Office of the Chairman Board Rm., 6th Floor DOF Building Roxas Blvd., Manila

The submission and opening of Eligibility and Bid Envelopes previously scheduled on **May 19, 2004** is hereby cancelled.

Eligibility and bid documents shall be issued to applicants upon filing a Letter of Intent to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid and payment of a non-refundable fee of US$200.00 for Protection & Indemnity Cover and Php5,000.00 each for Motor Car and Marine Open Policies, to the National Power Corporation; however, for the P&I Cover, bidders who participated in the 1st Bidding shall be exempt from payment of the Bid Fee.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Screening, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification, and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of existing laws, rules and regulations.

The JBC and EEG reserve the right to reject any and all bids or Letters of Intent, waive any defect therein and accept the offer that they deem most advantageous to the government.

EVALUATION & ELIGIBILITY GROUP
DOF-NPC-GSIS Joint Bidding
Committee

(PDI-May 2, 3, 8 & 9, 2004)

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NOTICE

MR. ARNEL MACARIOLA
Account Executive

Notice is hereby given that **Mr. Arnel Macariola** is no longer connected with **Superstar Printing Inc.** Any transactions entered into between this person and your company shall not be honored.

(PDI-May 3, 2004)

NOTICE

MS. LEAH LIM
Accounting

Notice is hereby given that **Ms. Leah Lim** is no longer connected with **Superstar Printing Inc.** Any transactions entered into between this person and your company shall not be honored. An **administrative investigation** is currently underway to determine the extent of this persons' **criminal and/or civil liability.**

(PDI-May 3, 2004)

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email: pid@info.com.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(Re-bidding)

The Armed Forces of the Philippines invites all Suppliers who are themselves the Manufacturer to apply for eligibility and to bid in the Single-Stage bid process for the **Supply and Delivery of 40mm Grenade Launcher** of the Philippine Navy with an approved budget of **Twelve Million Thirty Six Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Pesos (Php 12,036,480.00).** Said budget shall be charged against the AFP Modernization Program CY 2000 funds.

Bid documents shall only be available for issuance starting **May 03, 2004** until **June 10, 2004** during office hours at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability, Materiel and Technology Development, J9, GHQ, AFP, 3rd Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. The bid documents shall be issued upon payment of **One Thousand Two Hundred Pesos (Php 1,200.00),** which is not refundable. The form of payment shall be in cash or cashier's check in favor of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder, authorizing its representative to purchase the bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of said documents.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **May 18, 2004 at 9:00 am** (local time) at **Silid Panday Pira**, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Bidders may submit their query/ies, if any, in writing to the BAC Secretariat not later than seven (7) working days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

Deadline for submission of bid envelopes is on **June 11, 2004** at **9:00 am** (local time) and followed by the Opening of Bids at **09:30 am** at Silid Panday Pira.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any or all bids based on the grounds for disqualification specified in RA 9184 without assuming any obligation whatsoever for expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder(s) in the preparation of the bid.

(Original Signed)
REYNALDO D RIVERA
Major General AFP
Chairman, BAC

(PDI – May 3 & 10, 2004)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Telefax Nr 421-2327; 911-6001 Loc 6592; 9117551
website: www.afp.mil.ph
e-mail: pid@info.com.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(Re-bidding)

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) invites all interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid in the 2-Stage bid process for the Acquisition of Equipment for Two (2) Coast Watch Stations of the Philippine Navy with an approved budget of Fifty-Three Million and Six Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php53,600,000.00). Said budget shall be charged against the AFP Modernization Program funds.

Only bids from accredited integrators of coastal surveillance systems shall be entertained.

The 1st stage bid documents shall be available for issuance starting **April 26, 2004** until **June 02, 2004** during office hours at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability, Materiel and Technology Development, J9, GHQ, AFP, 3rd Floor Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. The bid documents shall be issued upon payment of Five Thousand, Three Hundred and Sixty Pesos (Php5,360.00), which is not refundable. The form of payment shall be in cash or cashier's check in favor of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder, authorizing its representative to purchase the 1st stage bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of said documents.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **May 17, 2004** at 9:00 am (local time) at the Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor Bulwagang Mabini. Bidders may submit their query/ies, if any, in writing to the BAC Secretariat not later than seven (7) working days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

Deadline for submission of 1st stage envelopes is on **June 03, 2004** at 9:00 am (local time) and followed by the Opening of Bids at 9:30 am at Silid Panday Pira. Only those bidders found eligible shall be allowed to participate in the 2nd stage bidding activities.

The AFP reserves the right to reject any or all bids based on the grounds for disqualification specified in RA 9184 without assuming any obligation whatsoever for expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder(s) in the preparation of the bid.

FOR THE CHAIRMAN DND-BAC;

(Sgd.) **DIR RAMON EL MARTINEZ**
Vice-Chairman, DND-BAC

(PDI-April 26 & May 3, 2004)

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of

RUBEN "BANTILING" EALDAMA

of Igbaras, Iloilo; San Juan; and California

who died in Arcadia, California after receiving the Last Sacraments on 17 February 2004.

wish to convey sincerest heartfelt gratitude to all those who condoled with the members of the family during their time of bereavement with Eucharistic Masses, novena prayers, flowers, visits, vigils, messages of sympathy and / or attended funeral rites.

GOODNIGHT MOMMY... - We miss you very much.

LOVINGLY REMEMBERED
on her 2nd Death Anniversary

BARBARA V. MEDINA

December 4, 1935 – May 3, 2002

Holy Masses will be held at the following churches:

Lord's Transfiguration Parish, Angeles City, Pampanga .... 8:00 AM
Santo Domingo Church, Quezon City .... 8:00 AM
Mt. Carmel Parish Church, Proj. 6, QC .... 6:00 PM

Her family requests pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

"We know that God raised the Lord Jesus from death. He will raise us to life with Jesus. He will present us, along with you, to God."
2 Corinthians 4:14

DRA. COVADONGA DEL GALLEGO VDA. DE ROMUALDEZ

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on May 01, 2004 at the age of 89.

Her bereaved children **QUASI** and **PEACHY**, **JOHNNY**, **NIÑA** and **MANNY**, **TOTS** and **SHIRLEY**, **BABE** and **DOODS**, **WACO**, **ANA** and **LITO**; and all her grandchildren with all her relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains have been transferred to the Funeraria Paz Bonifacio Chapel at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque.

Interment will take place tomorrow right after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

Please omit flowers.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT
MESSAGE OF THANKS
DEATH ANNIVERSARY

"A rare and great light has gone out,
but one that has made all others shine brighter."

HON. SAMILO N. BARLONGAY

of Taft, Eastern Samar

Commissioner, Civil Service Commission
Deputy Executive Secretary, Office of the President
Judge, Regional Trial Court of Manila and Valenzuela
Bar Examiner in Political Law, 2001 and 2002
Professor of Law, University of the Philippines
City Administrator, Malabon

Peacefully joined our Creator on 30 April 2004 at the age of 65.

His loving wife **Gloria Policarpio**; children **Lani** and **Jess Macasaet**, **Randy** and **Yek Mabaquiao**, **Darrell** and **Eden De Guzman**; grandchildren **Fonzy**, **Luis**, **Kimy**, **Gaby** and **Lance**; brother **Juanito** and sister **Preciosa** & her family request prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at **La Funeraria Paz**,
G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on 08 May, Saturday at the
Serenity Memorial Gardens, Caloocan City
after the 8 a.m. Mass.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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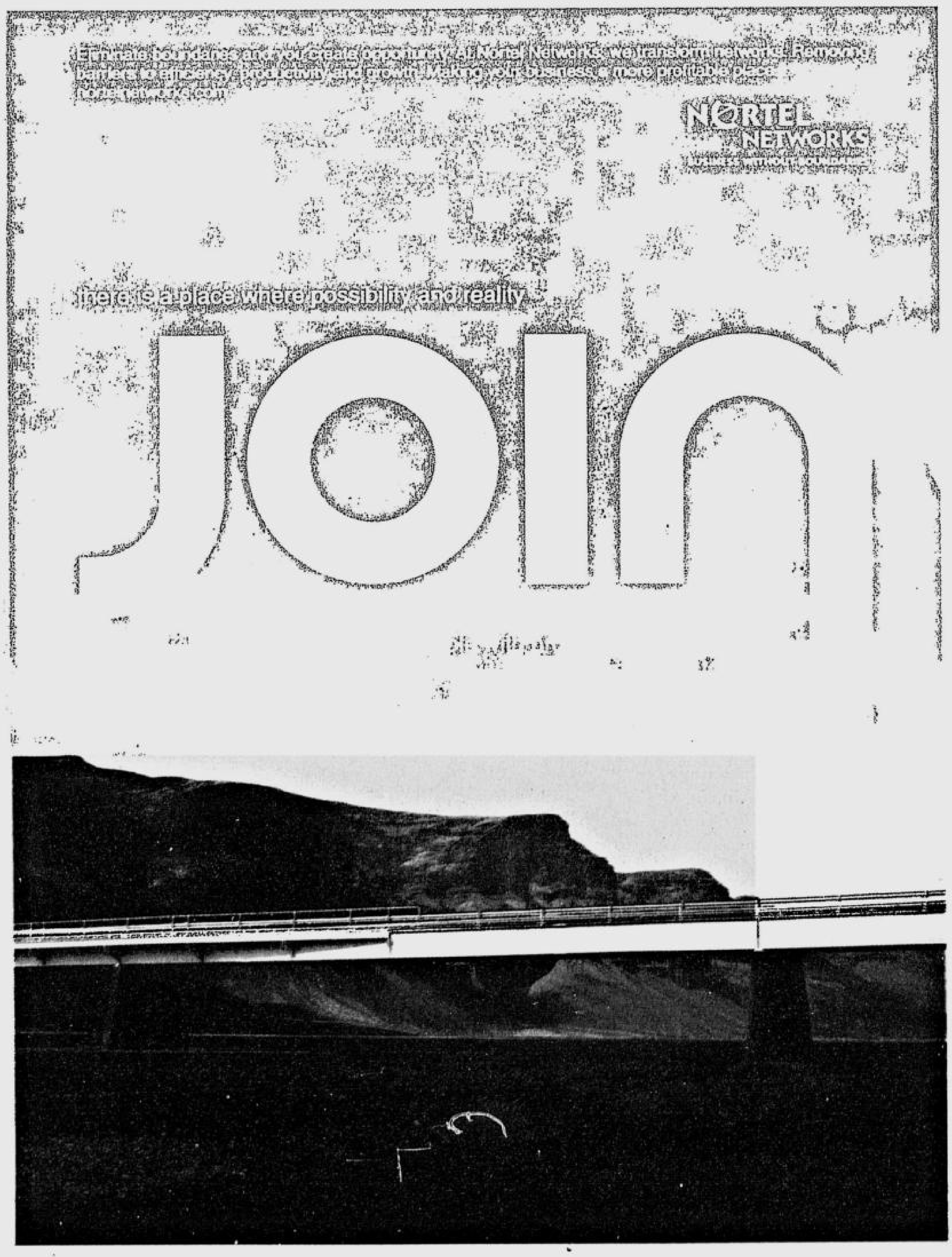
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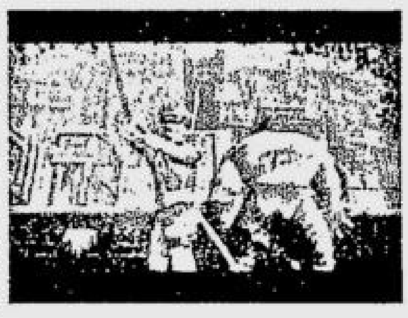
Kurosawa classic . . .

From page B19

ous of the attack moves you're making.

Seven Samurai 20xx has an interesting storyline taken from the Kurosawa original, and initially the gameplay is entertaining. However, after a few stages and ridiculously easy bosses, you'd find that it is insanely repetitive and requires very little strategy. It is also very linear. After entering a room or area, Natoe automatically draws his sword and says: "Perish!" The doors close and fighting begins, refusing to end until you clear the room of humanoid scum. After which Natoe will say his trademark and irritatingly repetitive quip: "That was easy."

You can say that again. You don't need to exert much effort to clear an area. Just press "X" and Natoe will dash to the nearest enemy and start hacking away. The game is a button masher's delight. Even the bosses are easy. And, for crying out loud, one of the boss fights involved twins who were—of all things—futuristic rappers! And I thought the rap song at the start of "Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon" was baaa-aaad.



And, if you're too dumb to figure out where to go after an area is cleared, big green arrows point the way to your next destination. Don't bother trying to backtrack because more often than not the door you entered in from would be closed—there's no other way but to move forward.

This tightly linear aspect of the game spoils the sprawling environments which Moebius no doubt invested a lot of talent on. The surrounding areas in this game are huge, but often you won't be able to explore them because you're limited to moving down a road or across a bridge or room, with all other directions being blocked by rubble, steel bars or some other object. There are some areas where you can roam around, but generally it's run-of-the-mill stuff.

The cutscenes, however, are well-executed. The first five-minute scene is actually impressive and whets your appetite to jump into the game, but after a while you get tired of the gameplay and wish you could just sit down, watch the cutscenes and let the story unfold. The music isn't bad, with Ryuichi Sakamoto composing the opening and ending themes for a soundtrack to be released by Virgin Music. However, in-game music, dialogue and sound are lacking and repetitive.

Pre-fight cutscenes, by the way, will show your samurai brethren running like chickens or doing some other chore, leaving you to fight on your own. That's when Natoe will automatically draw his sword and say "Perish." The doors in that area will close, you close your eyes, mash the "X" and square buttons, lather, rinse and repeat till you hear Natoe say: "That was easy." That's the cue for you to open your eyes and see that the area has already been cleared.

After each level, you're shown some stats on how many times you hit which button, the number of kills you made and your accuracy rate. You'd often get a kill accuracy rate of more than 100 percent, meaning your slice-to-kill ratio is super-efficient. That's because oftentimes one slash of your blade hits more than one enemy. Depending on how well you clear a chapter, a certain number of points will be added to your HP. The stats even estimate the number of calories Natoe used up clearing the level, and even estimates the number of calories you yes, you, the player spent by completing that level! One level had Natoe consuming 7,112.3 calories, while my estimated calorie consumption was 6.5 as I hit the attack button 3,443 times, the guard button 3 times and the step button 196 times. So much for exercise by mashing on three buttons and moving the left analog stick.

There's also a pseudo-RPG part of the game where you get to run around in a limited space and talk to potential samurai recruits, although even this is linear. All the other non-player characters look the same, they say one-liner gibberish and give you useless info. And there's not much incentive to run around anyway since the environment and people are not interactive and there are no sidequests or chests to open—just new enemies to kill and button-mash. There aren't even incentives when you kill a new boss, not a new item or weapon or anything at all except for another kill in your stats. But eventually you'll bump into someone who'll trigger the next event of the game.

Seven Samurai 20xx could have been more interesting with a multiplayer option. However, as I said earlier, your companions leave you alone during pre-fight cutscenes, so Natoe fights all by himself all the time. This is in stark contrast to the cooperative way by which the samurai in Kurosawa's film dispatched the bandits, letting them in through a small gap in the village one by one and then slicing them up once the gap is closed.

The game is fast and visually aesthetic, it has great swordplay, but it's no "Ninja Gaiden." Ninja Gaiden, by the way, is a great game but is "!@$#!*&!" hard.

Seven Samurai 20xx also suffers from frequent frame rate drops. At first I thought they were part of the effects—some slow-motion kind of gimmick when you make a good hit or when you clear out a whole bunch of enemies with one blow (something which was executed well in "Beyond Good and Evil"). Or something like a Matrix-style slow-mo effect. Then I realized that the game just couldn't handle the number of enemies and movements you're making onscreen as the aging PS2 hardware chugs along. The slowdown occurs whether or not you're in battle—just having many characters onscreen bogs the game down!

And one more thing. Although the game is easy, there are no save options in-between chapters. Most of the chapters are pretty short, no more than 30 minutes, but some are rather lengthy. I want the option to save at certain points of the game instead of playing through entire chapters.

Your thumb will get numb with this game. Worse, your brain might suffer the same fate.

I fervently wish that the trend to bank on classics like Bruce Lee and Akira Kurosawa films does not continue. In the future I would hate to see crappy games like "Ben Hur 20xx" where the gameplay consists of your character who looks like Charles Heston racing on a chariot ala "Circus Maximus." Worse, I'd hate to see a game like "Rebel Without a Cause 20xx" where you play as James Dean in a "bishojo" game as you jump around collecting coins to gain the favor of Natalie Wood. The ultimate goal of the game would be to collect enough coins so you could score with Natalie Wood because, let's face it, Natalie would.

Enough of this blabbering about Seven Samurai 20xx. I'm going back to Ninja Gaiden.

INFOTECH

E-mail: pr_info_tech@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Leo Magno

More firms, investors want to piggyback on 'David'

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

STARTUP software firm SpecOps Laboratories, which developed a software enabling Windows applications to run on Linux, has attracted the interest not only of the Linux community but also software giant Microsoft Corp., a top executive told Infotech.

Now that the word is out about a successful attempt to bridge the Windows and Linux worlds, Microsoft seems to be paying more attention to SpecOps.

SpecOps Labs chief executive officer Frederick Lewis said that the software giant and the software startup have been in contact last week.

Details of discussions between the two companies, however, were not disclosed.

Earlier, the head of Microsoft Philippines, Antonio Javier, said that the David software gives more options to people wanting to "automate" but never clearly said that it would complement its existing application software that are now exclusively running on its own Windows operating system.

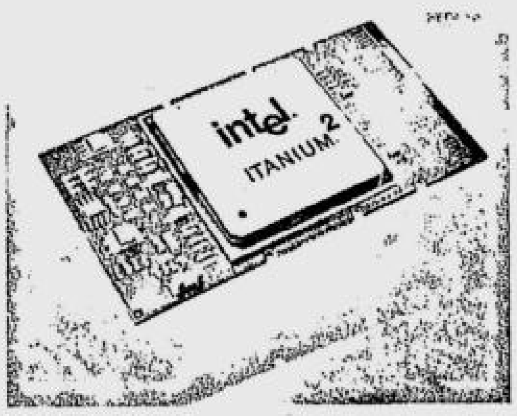
"We've been getting overrun with e-mail messages, mostly (about) people wanting to buy the software and investing. We're also getting requests to assist in beta testing of the software," Lewis said.

The executive also disclosed that Hewlett Packard has reiterated its interest in the software, as it requested to be provided more information about the software.

David is a middleware that allows Windows applications, such as Microsoft Word, Excel and Powerpoint, to be installed and run on a system operating on Linux—an open source computing environment.

David was demonstrated to both local and international press at the De La Salle University on April 22.

Lewis also said that the California Institute of Technology was also "interested" in the David software.



Intel chips to be named using new numbering scheme

By Alexander Villafania

INTEL Corp. will implement in the Philippines a new numbering scheme for its processors starting May as part of the company's major move to re-identify their processors away from the traditional clock-speed metric.

Intel's Celeron, Pentium and Centrino processors would be reintroduced into the Philippine market as the 300, 500 and 700 series.

Ricky Banaag, country manager of Intel Microelectronics Inc., said the company is already embarking on a major awareness program among its local resellers and distributors on the new numbering system.

The company will continue to allow the selling of existing inventory of Pentium, Celeron and Centrino processors until stocks with the new number scheme arrive.

Meanwhile, Banaag said the new numbering scheme would not be incorporated yet on the server-based Xeon and Itanium processors.

Banaag said the new scheme allows customers to have a better and more informed approach on buying a new computer, which he said Intel is promoting to eventually become a fully multimedia center.

Banaag explained that the numbering scheme follows the way buyers purchase their products based on three aspects: usage, the kind of processor needed and the processor's features.

"People have to associate the chips they buy with their real needs. The new system also makes it easier to identify features of all our processors," Banaag explained.

Intel Corp. announced its new numbering scheme on April 2, amid early speculations that the chip giant would eventually drop its clock-speed metric, which has been the most pronounced method of identifying their main products.

Traditionally, Intel tags all of its processors based on their clock-speed or the speed at which the processor can execute a command, hence the megahertz or gigahertz differentiation. Buyers always ask for the specific clock-speed when buying an Intel processor.

According to Banaag, the new scheme still keeps the clock-speed metric, but will be associated firmly with the processor's L2 cache and the front side bus, two other features of the processor that have significant effects on a chip's overall performance.

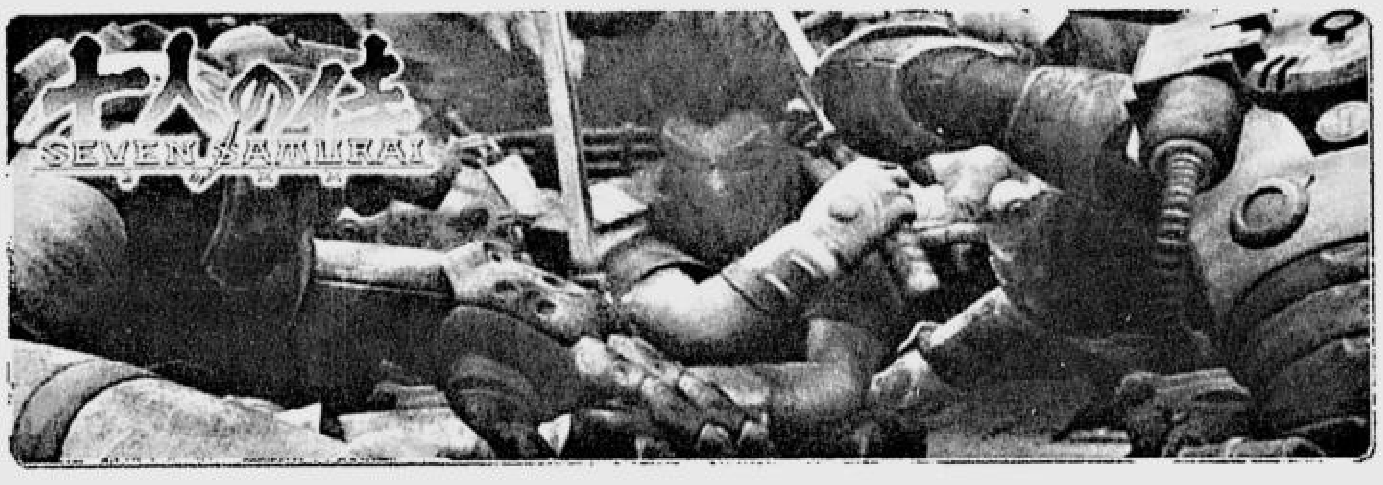
Banaag insists that the numbering scheme is a "measurement of higher performance."

Incidentally, AMD was the first to dump the clock speed metric as a measurement of chip performance. It started two years ago when it introduced its Athlon processors and used real-world application performance as a benchmark for its products.

On the other hand, Banaag said the new scheme was not a late response to AMD's earlier redirection from the clock-speed metric. Instead, he explains that the new scheme was a significant part of their overall marketing strategy for their processors.

"We're not dumping the clock speed measurement. In fact, we're enhancing it to establish a better method for people to know the other features of our processors and be able to fully utilize them," Banaag said.

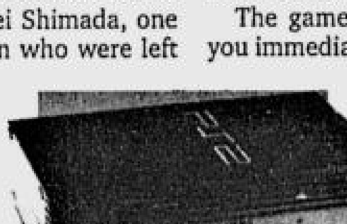
Kurosawa classic butchered in 'Seven Samurai 20xx'



By Leo Magno

LAST year I did a review of one of the worst games to come out on the Xbox, "Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon." The game came out on the 30th death anniversary of the martial arts legend, and I said that the Great One would have turned in his grave and dealt Universal Interactive a one-inch punch were he still around to see the game. From one classic we go to another, a game based on Akira Kurosawa's "Seven Samurai." Exactly 50 years after the theatrical debut of the film classic, game developer Sammy Studios released "Seven Samurai 20xx" on the PS2. This time, it's Kurosawa who would slice Sammy Studios to pieces were he still around to see the sacrilege they have done to his film.

I saw Kurosawa's Seven Samurai twice, and was moved by the simple yet elegant way the story was told. It stars Toshiro Mifune as the loco and drunk farmer's son who's a samurai wannabe, complete with a fake record of his supposed samurai lineage listing him as a 13-year-old named "Kikuchiyo." The film also stars Takashi Shimura as the aging yet noble Kambei Shimada, one of three from the seven who were left standing at the end of the film.



Similar characters play pivotal roles in the PS2 game. Instead of Kikuchiyo, you play the young and cocky Natoe. In the next stage you'll encounter a character also named Kambei. In the film, however, Kambei saved a kidnapped boy from a thief who locked himself in a hut. He asked for a priest's clothes and two balls of rice and then proceeded to shave his head at the river. In the game, Kambei asked for beggar's clothes and saved a boy in a similar plight. This is also where the film's Kikuchiyo and the game's Natoe meet up with the elderly samurai.

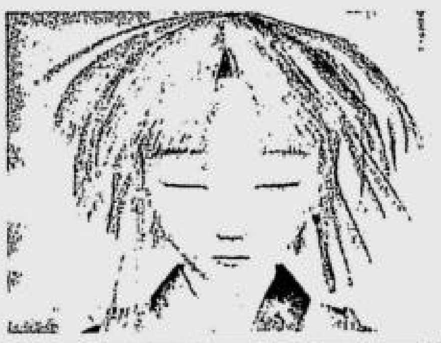
Seven Samurai 20xx follows the film's basic plot. The film is set in early 16th century feudal Japan. Peasant farmers are plagued with land tax, forced labor, civil war and now they also have to contend with bandits. They go to town in search of rent-a-samurai, and Kambei as the first samurai they find recommended that seven samurai be recruited to defeat the group of 40 bandits. So begins their search. Even the strategy they employed to protect the farmers' village was the same: evacuate the three huts and the mill at the outskirts of the village and build a moat across the main entrance.

The game follows the same thread, although it is set in a Final Fantasy-like future—even one of the female characters in the game wears clothes that you would expect to find in the closets of Rikku and Yuna. Some may find the visual and character design of the game to be familiar because it was done by Moebius, best known for his work in Heavy Metal.

In Seven Samurai 20xx, you play Natoe who reluctantly accepts an offer to help villagers protect themselves not from bandits but from humanoids. You then set off to complete the roster of seven samurai needed to do the job.

The game is fast-paced and throws you immediately into action, surrounded by hordes of enemies left and right. You start out with a Katana called Kazusanosuke Kaneshige, although you have other options like the Bisha Monten, Melange, Jambiya, the Roaring Sword or the Onikirimaru. You get to unlock more swords as you move along. But believe me, it won't matter which sword you choose throughout the game.

Your sword movements are fast and elegant and the sound and light effects of steel clashing on steel are pretty. You hit the square button to attack, triangle to block and "X" to dash in different directions. Press "X" longer and you'll do a somersault. After a gauge at the bottom left side of the screen is filled up,



you can press both L1 and R1 triggers for Natoe to enter dual-sword (Nitoh-Ryu) mode for a limited time, after which you have to wait for it to recharge. You control Natoe using the left analog stick, the right one is not used, not even to control camera angle. You can't look around since the cam angles are a mixture between dynamic and preset, something like "Eternal Darkness" for the GameCube.

And that's about it. After mashing on three buttons, doing somersault and dash attacks for stage upon stage of mindless enemies, there's no real value anymore in this game. It reminds me of "Dynasty Warriors" or "Mystic Heroes" where you don't need a brain to complete the game. All you need are good thumb and wrist muscles and a lot of patience. The game does have a huge command list of attack techniques, like Hemimorphite, Crazy Lace Agate, Chrysocolla, Aragonite, Hematite, Angelite, Selenite Roses, Bismuth, Carnelian and dozens of other exotic-sounding attacks, but you'd be a dork to memorize all of their button commands. It's easier to just button mash, feel the adrenaline flow and get the satisfaction of destroying dozens of enemies with a nasty samurai blade oblivi-

KUROSAWA/B18

Finding missing link in Linux, Windows compatibility

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

IN A LITTLE seminar room of the De La Salle University (DLSU), Caslon Chua, chief software architect of SpecOps (which stands for special operations laboratories), took members of the local and international media through a guided tour of a software program called "David."

Introducing what the company is touting as the next breakthrough in computing, Chua told the audience that the demonstration was about to begin.

"But before I start, I should tell you that the David bridge software has been running the Microsoft Powerpoint presentation on this computer," said Chua pointing to the computer running on Red Hat Linux distribution.

The audience seemed unmoved.

Chua who is a Ph. D. holder in computer science and the current graduate school director of the College of Computer Studies in DLSU, was about to demonstrate a "bridge" software which SpecOps developed.

This software, the company claimed, would eventually link two different environments of computing: the free operating system Linux and the commercial Microsoft Windows operating system. Both systems are now very popular, and the former is slowly attracting new users due to its lower cost.

Linux is an operating system developed by Linus Torvalds of Finland. It was eventually given to the computing world for free use. Unlike Windows, Linux is an operating system—the computer program that runs a computer system—that can be used without the need to pay costly software licenses.

When Chua opened the Microsoft Office applications in Linux using David, he showed the audience that the "look-and-feel" of the applications remained intact, only this time it was running on a Linux box.

By the time he ended the demo, the audience was applauding.

But what is David?

According to Peter Valdes, chief technology officer of SpecOps, David uses a "new approach" in simulating the Windows environment in a Linux-powered system. Not wanting to reveal the company's trade secrets, he said that David is a breakthrough technology for today's computing world.

According to SpecOps Labs website, David is set "to provide a platform, which will serve as a viable alternative to the MS Windows Operating System."

The company's Version 1.0 of David "will be a middleware program that will sit on top of the free and open-source Linux operating system, and enable it to seamlessly run most Windows applications," the company said.

In the future, David will become part of an operating system that will be integrated into a web browser, "virtually eliminating the need for an operating system eventually, except to boot the computer and launch the browser."

SpecOps also claimed that David supports 16-bit applications (DOS/Windows v3.x) and 32-bit applications (Windows 95 applications; Windows NT/2K/XP applications), as well as Internet Explorer applications.

Customer information on new Oracle data hub

ORACLE recently introduced the Oracle Customer Data Hub, a new product that will give companies that operate disparate business applications a complete enterprise view of customer information.

Most businesses today can't answer the simple questions of "Who are my customers?" or "What do they own?" Historically, companies that have wanted to understand their customer base have undertaken complex custom integration projects. Now, with Oracle Customer Data Hub, Oracle delivers a packaged solution that will help companies obtain a real-time source of customer truth, whether the company uses the entire Oracle E-Business Suite, components of the Oracle E-Business Suite or none at all.

The Oracle Customer Data Hub consolidates customer data from different sources into a single customer repository, into which transactional applications are integrated. This enables customer data and related transactions to be immediately accessible and actionable throughout all business systems. In addition, consolidating customer data into a central repository enables companies to cleanse and enrich the customer data, creating a complete, consolidated picture of the customer base. The Oracle Customer Data Hub differs from a data warehouse in that it provides active and real-time access to customer data without the need to move data between the transaction system and a data warehouse.

The Oracle Customer Data Hub is comprised of three components. The Oracle Data Model, which underlies the Oracle E-Business Suite, is the basis of the hub and has been extended to support non-Oracle E-Business Suite and mixed application environments. Oracle Customers Online serves as a single window into a company's central repository of customer data. Finally, Oracle Data Librarian offers consolidation and data quality tools that help organizations create and maintain a consolidated, duplicate free enterprise customer database.

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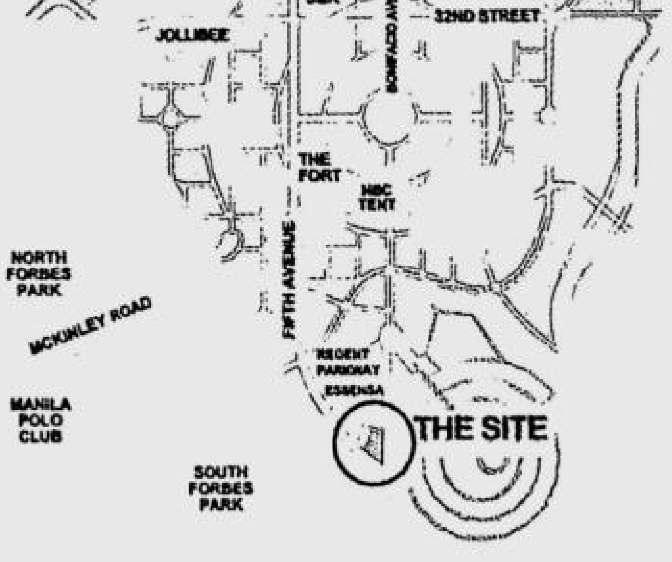
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RP workforce losing edge in English

By Amy R. Remo

FILIPINOS have long stood out in the global job market for being highly trained and proficient in English.

However, over the past few years, the country found itself fiercely competing with its Asean neighbors as its workers are slowly losing their ability to fluently speak, read and write English.

In 2002, a survey was conducted by the Gallup Organization of Executives of American corporations in the Philippines and American Chamber of Commerce Philippines among 17 sectors where American companies invest.

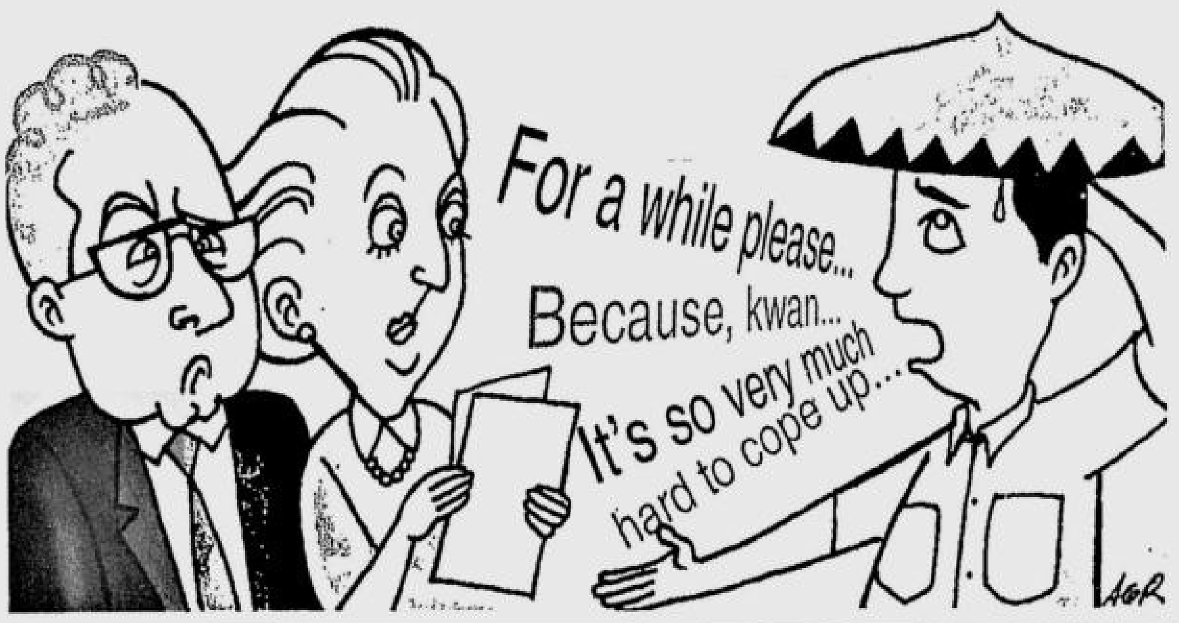
Results showed that although the Philippines remains competitive with its workforce, most respondents said there was "an erosion in the quality of English... jeopardizing the future of the country's chief international competitive advantage."

On a scale of 1 to 10, the sectors' rating in the English Language Ability of the current workforce was barely 6, noting it to be deteriorating.

Amcham Philippines believes that "the deterioration of English is rapid and extensive, undermining the country's chief international advantage. Positive workforce characteristics such as compensation, availability and turnover will not compensate for the loss of English-speaking capability."

According to an advocacy paper of AmCham entitled "The roadmap to more foreign investment," although the country has received a high rating of 82 percent for literacy and school enrollment, the quality of English taught in public schools is steadily declining.

One reason, the paper states, is that public schools are swamped with an increasing number of enrollees, at a rate of over 500,000 a year. Students receive limited English instruction of declining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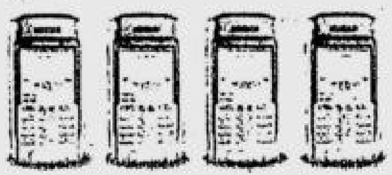

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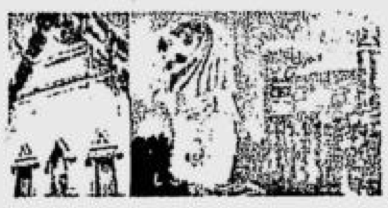

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What do political surveys have to do with business?

MAPping THE FUTURE

Edward L. Fereira

WITH the forthcoming presidential and national elections, political surveys have become a constant part of conversations, whether interesting or otherwise, from the bedroom to the boardroom.

Whether we like it or not, political surveys will haunt us—heaven forbid!—until after the May 10 elections.

But what are political surveys for? Are they conceived to anticipate the outcome of the elections? Are they conceived to anticipate the outcome of the elections? Are they done to deliberately influence the thinking and preference of every voting Filipino? Are they done to promote the imminent victory of a certain presidential candidate?

Readers of this column, I am sure, would have different opinions and perspectives depending on where one stands.

As I belong to the Philippine business community, I would like to devote to this article my personal opinion about political surveys.

What really is the relevance of political surveys to businessmen? Do political surveys influence the vision and future plans of local and multinational companies operating in the country?

Do political surveys wreak havoc in the strategic planning processes of large companies and even the small and medium-scale enterprises or SMEs? Do political surveys generate a mindset or attitude among members of the Philippine business community; whether cautious or "wait and see," aggressive or complacent?

I know some businessmen who may disagree with me. I firmly believe that political surveys do not have anything to do with my business. They do not have any influence on the vision and the future plans of my group of companies. They do not even play any vital role in the strategic planning process of my firms. They do not encourage me to have a pre-conditioned attitude.

To this, I can say with deep pride and enthusiasm, that the country's political situation, whether good or bad, does not even make me think of leaving the country and investing my hard-earned money in other parts of the world.

My goal for my business is to do well always in spite of the results of political surveys, and who wins in the presidential race. My personal goal is to make our political situation irrelevant to my business decisions.

I firmly believe that there is hope for the Philippines. It is just a matter of looking at the brighter side of everything.

All countries, even the most powerful ones, have their own share of economic and social problems. The Filipino will always survive. The resiliency of the Filipino will always prevail.

Having said all these, however, it is morally expedient for all of us to put our ballots to good use on May 10 and think hard when choosing the right leader for our country. We must be vigilant and participate in activities that will ensure honest, orderly and peaceful elections.

We must bring back and nurture our old-fashioned values like self-respect, respect for others, and love of country. Refusing to be part of election fraud should come from a genuine desire to rebuild our country. Love of country must not be mere lip service but backed by solid actions aimed at helping our nation become stronger.

Our education and media sectors play a major role in rearming the morals of the citizenry; that of engraving in the psyche and soul of every Filipino the need for continuing education, placed at the service of the family, local community and country as a whole.

When all is said and done, we need to look beyond elections and move forward as a nation. If an honest, orderly and peaceful election is achieved, then let us bury our differences and join hands as one nation to build a better Philippines.

Elections become even more credible if we, as a people, are able to do this. Only then can we truly say that we love our country above ourselves.

In the meantime, let us forget those political surveys. What do they have to do with business, anyway?

(This artcle reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is President and CEO of Ferycor International Management Group Inc., National President of the Philippine Movement for Good Governance and immediate past president of the MAP. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

Getting to know new law on commercial disputes

By Raul J. Palabrica
Contributor

ENFORCING a commercial arbitration award in the Philippines can be a pain in the neck. Regardless of the kind of arbitration procedure—domestic or international—used, resorting to judicial process is often needed to implement the arbitrator's decision.

Once filed in court, the parties against whom the award is sought to be enforced can tie up the case in litigation until the winning party is forced to agree to a compromise to cut its losses.

Under Republic Act No. 9285 (also known as the Alternative Dispute Resolution Act of 2004), the frustration and red tape that usually accompany the enforcement of foreign arbitral awards are expected to be minimized.

The recognition and enforcement of foreign arbitral awards will now be governed by the United Nations Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (the "New York Convention"), which was approved in 1958 and later ratified by the Philippine Senate.

The New York Convention spells out the procedures that signatory countries should observe in the appreciation of and compliance with decisions or awards rendered by arbitral tribunals in international commercial disputes.

Principle

The principle behind the New York Convention is simple: If an arbitration is shown to have been rendered in accordance with the parties' arbitration agreement, the courts of the country in which it is being enforced are obliged, as a matter of goodwill and comity, to give it full faith and credit.

Until the enactment of RA 9285, a foreign arbitral award was placed in the category of a judgment of a foreign court. This means an action for the execution of the award has to be filed in the regional trial court that has jurisdiction over the person or property of the affected party.

The request for execution can be denied by the court for any of the following reasons: lack of jurisdiction by the tribunal that rendered it, failure to give notice to the losing party, collusion, fraud or clear mistake of law or fact.

If any of these causes is invoked, the beneficiary of the award will practically be obliged to repeat the process he went through earlier in proving his right to the relief granted to him by the arbitral tribunal.

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RA 9825 seeks to avoid that delay. When confirmed by a regional trial court, foreign arbitral awards shall be treated and enforced in the same manner as final and executory decisions of courts of law of the Philippines.

The confirmation process, which the law has directed our Supreme Court to promulgate as part of the rules of court, will simply require the party asking for the enforcement of the award to file with a regional trial court the original or authenticated copy of the award and arbitration agreement.

If the award or agreement is not made in any of the country's official languages, the party shall submit a duly certified translation of the documents in any of those languages.

The party asking for the enforcement of the award also has to prove that the country in which the foreign arbitration judgment was made is a signatory to the New York Convention.

In case the foreign country is not a party to the New York Convention, RA 9285 nonetheless states that provisions should be made by our courts for the award to be accorded liberal treatment on grounds of comity and reciprocity.

Savings

A lot of time, money and effort can be saved if foreign arbitral awards are treated like final and executory decisions of our courts. In terms of litigation time, the savings translate to not less than two years.

As envisioned by the law, upon the confirmation of the authenticity of the award, the writ of execution can be immediately issued by the court and enforced by its sheriff.

But this does not mean that applications for the enforcement of foreign arbitral awards are immune from questioning by the adversely affected parties. The award can be disputed, but only for the grounds enumerated in the New York Convention.

The law specifically provides that the regional trial court shall disregard any other ground raised that is not included in the New York Convention.

The more significant grounds are: the subject of the commercial dispute is not capable of settlement by arbitration under the law of the country of application; and the recognition or enforcement of the award would be contrary to the public policy of that country.

Acceptance

Arbitration, as a means of settling commercial disputes, is not really a novel idea in our country. It has been in our statute books since the 1950s as part of the Civil Code.

But it has not gained wide acceptance because the law does not provide for incentives that would encourage the contending parties to resort to it in settling their disputes instead of running to the courts for relief.

With the Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration adopted by the United Nations and the New York Convention already considered part of our laws, a less expensive and shorter process is now available to Philippine business for the settlement of commercial disputes.

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RP workforce losing edge . . .

From page B2-1

quality and experience shortage of materials needed for learning such as textbooks.

Add to that the increasing overseas demand for experienced English teachers to work in the United States and England for salaries almost 10 to 20 times higher than what they earn in the country.

English Language Proficiency Program

The alarming decline in the ability of Filipinos to fluently speak, read and write English must be addressed to preserve this competitive advantage of Filipino workers.

It is for this reason that the English Language Proficiency Program was launched.

Last October 2003, AmCham and the Philippine-US Business Council signed a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Education and Commission on Higher Education for a six-point English Language Proficiency Program.

Major proponents of the program include Makati Business Club, Sun Microsystems Philippines, DynEd International (represented by Interactive Language Solutions), Knowledge Institute and Hopkins International Partners Inc.

"When we were doing the paper 'The roadmap to more foreign investment,' we identified six areas that the country needs to address to attract foreign investments," says AmCham treasurer John D. Forbes. "One of them was to maintain and improve Filipinos' ability in oral and written English."

Thus, the program is aimed at improving the English proficiency of the country's workforce, including the fresh graduates, in a bid to regain the competitive edge of the Filipinos in the world job market.

Cynthia Romero-Mamon, president of Sun Microsystems Philippines Inc. and head of the English proficiency program, says this was one way of tackling the problem of English proficiency—to go back to the basics.

"Obviously now, it is more than just the technology. English proficiency and comprehension are already major factors in hiring employees," Mamon adds.

Developed by DynEd, a California-based educational company, the program uses multimedia English teaching through a Computerized English Language Center (CELC).

The program uses a mix of classroom teaching and computer-aided instruction.

Trainees will take a test to determine their English ability—beginner, intermediate or advanced. Simultaneously, they will be taught theories on English grammar, reading and comprehension while they practice through a computer software.

The type of English to be taught can be tailor fit to one's course or profession.

Aside from providing access to a wide range of English language materials and resources, the program will also engage in an awareness and advocacy campaign to highlight the necessity of being certified in English language proficiency.

In December 2003, a memorandum of agreement was signed with the Philippine Normal University for it to establish and operate a Computerized English Language Center (CELC) for one year.

DynEd founder and president Lance Knowles and staff trained a group of PNU teachers and DepEd District English language supervisors, on the use of the software.

By February, PNU English teachers already started to integrate their English curriculum with the DynEd program.

The program will run for an initial three years and envisions a total of 50 Computerized English Language Centers (CELCs) operating throughout the country with around 250 teachers and 42,000 graduates trained and certified.

Benefits

For an individual, the program can provide better chances of employment locally or overseas and can be an advantage for them in terms of promotions.

For the employer, the program can provide highly skilled workers to operate businesses more efficiently and be able to satisfy customer requirements.

On a larger scale, it would help Filipino workers snag better job opportunities and fill in the huge demand for skilled workers abroad.

In the long run, AmCham envisions the establishment of additional CELCs under possible franchising opportunities or licensing agreements.

Another possibility is tapping existing computer training centers, schools and universities to offer the program to graduates and professionals seeking help to develop English skills.

(Individuals or companies interested in contributing to the program whether financial or in kind may contact AmCham at 818-7911 to 13 and look for executive director Rob Sears or Hilda Cleofe of the AmCham Foundation.)

LANCE Knowles of DynEd, who was on a visit to the PNU Computerized English Language Center, discusses the DynEd program with a staff member.

MOVEMENTS

Insular Life has new execs

Insular Life Chair of the Board and CEO Vicente R. Ayllon announced the appointment of two new company executives.

Wilfredo M. Llanto was appointed Senior vice president, finance and investment group head, and concurrent investment staff management head, and Eleanor F. Garcia-Tañada was named senior assistant vice president, head of new business division and medical director.

Llanto brings with him extensive experience in finance and investment as well as audit, corporate reengineering, and product development, gained from years of working for life insurance companies since 1977.

His work experience includes stints abroad, as general manager for Finance at Lippo Insurance Group, Ltd. in Hong Kong, and chief financial officer and technical adviser for Finance at PT Asuransi Lippo Life in Indonesia.

Intel Philippines names new GM

Intel Technology Philippines Inc. (ITPI), the Philippine subsidiary of Intel Corp., the world's largest chip maker, recently announced the appointment of Peter Iredale as the site's new general manager.

Iredale replaces Robin Martin who is now taking on the role of general manager of Intel's plant in Chengdu, China.

Before coming to the Philippines, Iredale was finance director at the Intel site in Ireland.

He brings to the Philippines a wealth of experience as he has held a variety of management positions in materials, logistics and finance as well as plant manager of ESSM, the Intel quality award winning systems manufacturing plant.

Prior to joining Intel, Iredale worked in support and operating management positions with a number of American multinational companies in Ireland.

Major global currencies on the go

By Rico M. Hizon
Contributor

WHEN the word currency comes up during a conversation, the first thing that comes to mind is "exchange rates."

How is the peso faring against the US dollar? What is the conversion rate of the dollar versus the yen or the euro? How did the dollar fare against a certain currency last week, today or what is this hour's rate? Or maybe, what are the trends in the near to medium term?

So many questions and so many answers. It's not easy determining the fluctuations in the currency markets. So today, we look at what makes global currencies gyrate and if it's a worthwhile investment. A fractional move up or down can mean a gain or a loss of thousands or even millions of dollars for investors.

There are a number of factors that could direct currencies up or down, such as political developments (coups, change in leadership), economic data (growth and inflation reports), terrorist attacks, movements in the stock (the US, Japan, European equity markets are most influential) and commodity markets (price of oil and gold), corporate scandals and a possible move in US interest rates, whether up or down.

I spoke with two very experienced currency watchers, Vasan Shridharan, HSBC's Regional Currency Strategist based in Singapore and John Noonan, Thomson IFR's Global Currency Analyst in Sydney, and I got their views on this highly volatile trading instrument.

1. For a new investor who would want to trade global currencies (US $, Euro, British Pound, Japanese Yen, Australian$, Philippine Peso, Singapore $ etc.)—What is your advise?

NOONAN:

Foreign exchange trading is a very risky business. There are many variables that decide an exchange rate movement and the market has a tendency to shift focus between factors very quickly. After 30 years of trading currencies my advice is to rely on technical analysis mostly. An individual looking to set out trading currencies should take a course in technical analysis and decide on a technical discipline that suits their risk profile.

2. What does it take to become a good currency trader?

SHRIDHARAN:

The most important element in being a successful trader is DISCIPLINE!!!. Know your limits! Do not be greedy! Always put in a "stop loss" order after entering a trade and try to use a ratio of at least 3 to 1 in gauging where to take a profit and where to take a loss.

In time you will get a feel for the fundamental analysis and you can weave that knowledge into your trading style.

3. Which Asian currencies are the best performers against the US dollar year to date? Will they continue to be strong versus the greenback?

SHRIDHARAN:

The Indian Rupiah and the Taiwan $ have done well because there is increasing sense that with underlying domestic demand improving and private investment spending set to pick up, central banks will tolerate stronger currencies.

NOONAN:

The South Korean Won and the Taiwan Dollar benefited from large foreign investment flows and their high-tech industries through exports have been able to take advantage of the recovering US economy.

But reports that China will attempt to slow down their booming economy could result in global investors shying away from North Asian equity markets, but if the US economy continues to rebound strongly both currencies should benefit from exports to the US.

4. Which Asian currencies are the worst performers so far year to date ? Will they continue to decline against the greenback?

NOONAN:

The Philippine Peso and Indonesian Rupiah are both likely to stay relatively weak for the balance of this year. The Philippine export performance continues to disappoint and the budget deficit continues to worsen. Analysts feel that economic reform has lagged while upcoming Presidential election underpins political uncertainties.

SHRIDHARAN:

Fear that a voluntary Chinese industrial slowdown and expectations of higher global interest rates at the margin make the Australian and New Zealand dollars less attractive. These trends will likely extend into the coming months.

5. Among the Asian cross-rates? Which ones do you favor and why?

SHRIDHARAN:

Some of the currencies which should do well are the Indonesian Rupiah, Thai Baht and Taiwan $ against the dollar and its regional counterparts.

NOONAN:

We favor the Korean Won gaining more ground against the Philippine peso and Indonesian Rupiah.

6. The Philippine peso is now trading at 56 to the US dollar, where does it go from here?

NOONAN:

Higher US interest rates should give the US $ a boost overall and uncertainties surrounding the country's political and economic landscape should see the peso-dollar trend towards 57/58 in the months ahead.

SHRIDHARAN:

Our year-end target is 55 against the dollar.

7. All eyes though are on the the US Federal Reserve. Many are wondering if they would raise interest rates due to a vastly improving US economy and how may this impact the US dollar?

SHRIDHARAN:

Whether they raise before June or after, is US dollar supportive. However, it may be more so the case against the EUR. Asian currencies can be expected to cope better because for one they are cheap when measured in real effective exchange rate terms and secondly, domestic demand appears to be more resilient today.

NOONAN:

I believe the US Central Bank would raise rates in June by 25 basis points. This should be supportive of the US dollar overall, as it would narrow the interest rate differential between the US and its trading partners.

We see the Euro-US dollar for instance, moving down as low as 1.1400 in a reaction to a Fed hike, but once the initial reaction settles, a move back above 1.2000 will ensue. But global terrorism and the boiling pot in the Middle East remain potential USD negatives.

(Rico Hizon anchors BBC World's daily financial news program "Asia Business Report" every weekday morning)

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by Sharlene Go

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Is there a trick to developing confidence?

GOODNESS GRACES

Lia S. Bernardo

Q: I am at a point in my professional life wherein I feel the strong need to develop my professional image. I feel that it is crucial to my career development. My big problem is confidence. I am not very good-looking and I am on the plump side. Although I can say that I am very good at my work I feel that developing my professional image is the key to my career advancement. Is there a trick to develop confidence?

A: Congratulations in taking the first step towards developing your professional image. What you need to remember is that plumpness and thinking that you are not good-looking are your biggest hindrances towards developing self-esteem. Remember that there is no such thing as an ugly woman; there are only women who are too lazy to take the time to fix themselves. If you feel you are on the chubby side take up an exercise class or get a gym membership. Not only will you lose the excess pounds but you will also feel a lot better about yourself. Go to a reputable salon and invest in a good haircut, you will be surprised at how much self confidence will develop in you just by having a nice hairstyle.

Bear in mind that the key to communicating this professional image you are developing to others is indeed self-confidence. If you do not feel good about yourself there is no way others can feel good around you. I will share with you an article written by Mary Mitchell entitled "5 ways to be more confident now," along with my comments on how it can apply to your specific situation.

Move your body. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Park farther away and walk the distance. Ride a bike and work up a sweat. Exercise clears the brain and the lungs. It increases strength and endurance, and it defuses anger and frustration. You'll feel energized, and let's face it, energy is attractive. Nothing enhances your overall appearance like rosy cheeks and a lively step. So get out of the chair and get the creative juices flowing.

Take a look at what you're wearing. It's what others see first. Everything you put on is a reflection of your taste, aesthetic sense and style. If your attire is inappropriate, colleagues are apt to question your judgment and your ability as a significant player.

When you're considering how to dress, ask yourself: How do I want to be perceived? Who are the people I want to impress? We're not talking fashion statements or fancy clothing; we're talking about what's effective in a given environment.

And remember these four key factors:

- Fit. Whether you use a tailor or not, make sure all your clothes fit well.
- Cleanliness. Dry cleaning and machine washing can damage clothes. Make sure your outfits are clean without pulls, stray threads or chipped buttons.
- Shoes. Everybody notices shoes, mostly because we get nervous and end up looking down. Keep shoes well soled, shined and in good repair.
- Smile. A clean, bright smile goes a long way to making us feel better about ourselves.

3. Breathe. Stand still. Find sanctuary inside yourself. We are so time-crunched, information-bludgeoned, downsized and multitasked that it's spiritually suffocating. Without a way to focus on who we are inside, we add to the chaos.

Learn "belly breathing": Lie on the floor, be quiet and place your hands on your tummy. Breathe from your belly, letting your belly rise and fall like bellows. Babies breathe this way. I've learned to belly breathe on elevators, in bathroom stalls, and in the middle of crowded rooms when I need to calm down and focus. This trick also helps you focus and get rid of nervousness when you are about to start a meeting or make a presentation.

4. Be disciplined. Keep your agreements. Be on time. Be mindful and in the present. When we stick to the "now" and don't chase rabbits, we are involved and aware of opportunities. Those we deal with sense that we're fully with them. That has a tremendous effect on the quality of your personal and professional relationships.

5. Give and receive. Give what you want. If you want more cooperation and respect, give respect and cooperate. If you want to succeed, help others succeed. If you want more joy, be more joyful. And be open to giving to yourself. Honor your own worthiness to receive or no one else will. When we circulate our positive energy, we create more and more to enjoy.

Perhaps, as you read this, you're thinking, "These seem so easy, they couldn't possibly work." But those people who are most confident do live simply. They don't let life become overwhelming. Try these simple tricks and watch it become part of your everyday life. Your self confidence will grow a little bit each day, and you will see and feel the difference. Good luck and send me an email to inform me of your progress.

Please email your business etiquette queries to etiquetteconsultants@hotmail.com names of senders will not be published.

Steadfast principles define exec's moves

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

KANT

FACTS, logic and principles.

These three words summarize how Yashi Kant, managing director of Oracle (Philippines) Corp., gets the local subsidiary with 100 employees to achieve its goals.

"These help in motivating people and getting them to understand where the company wants to go. It is very hard to contract decisions if these are based on these three," Kant said in an interview.

The 39-year-old Kant explained that many chief executive officers fail to make a right decision because emotions sometimes cloud their judgment.

But by using the cold, hard facts, even the most difficult decisions can be made.

Kant will mark his first year in the Philippines as managing director in June, and he said that he feels that he has adjusted well in the country after stints in China, Singapore and his native India.

He said his main challenge in the Philippines to maintain and grow Oracle's business in the midst of an extremely challenging political and economic environment.

"We also want to gain market share. We are already number one in database, and in applications we are neck and neck with SAP. With our skillsets and talent, we can increase our share," he said.

MANAGEMENT STYLES

Kant, who once entertained the thought of becoming a professional cricket player, describes himself a hands-on manager who wants to be abreast of all company developments.

"What I try to do is to provide direction and see where we can find the right opportunities. Gone are the days when we experienced 40 to 50 percent growth. It is back to basics," he said.

Going back to basics means identifying the right target markets and employing the right people and the right tools.

"We have to be disciplined and we should maintain our focus," he stressed.

One of the areas for opportunity is the growing demand by small and medium enterprises for enterprise solutions.

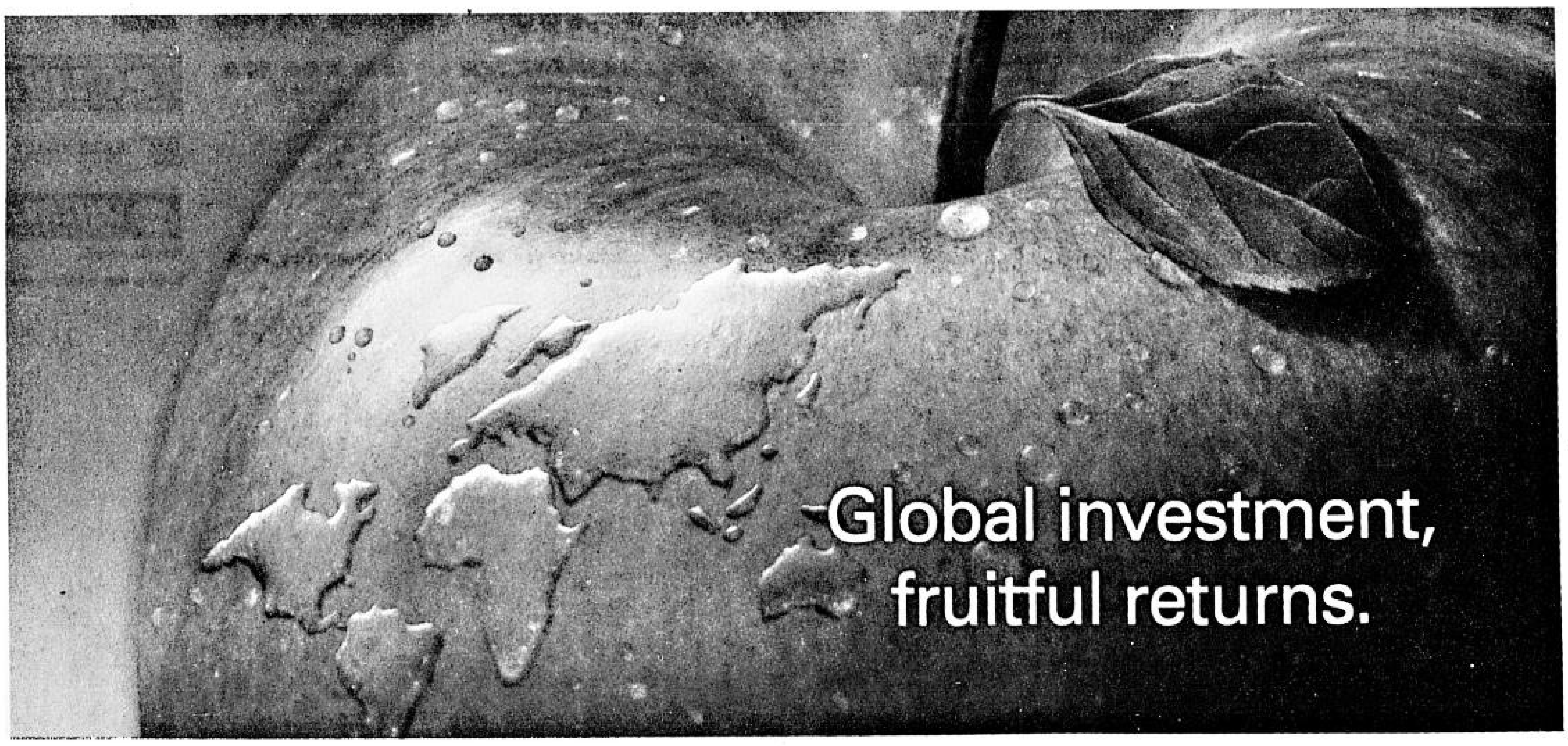
Kant said he wants to foster a culture in the company where people can agree to disagree.

He said this is needed to keep creativity alive in the company.

Kant holds a Bachelor's Degree in Electronics and Telecommunications from the Maharashtra Institute of Technology in India and a Post Graduate diploma in Business Management from the Birla Institute of Management Technology in New Delhi, India.

Prior to his stint in the Philippines, he was regional director of the alliance and channels business of Oracle in Beijing, China.

He brings to the country 16 years experience in direct and indirect sales and business development. He has extensive international experience in working in a multi-cultural environment.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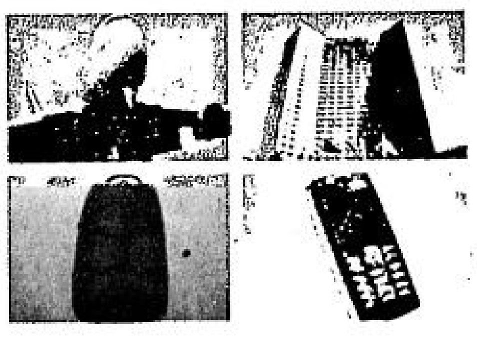

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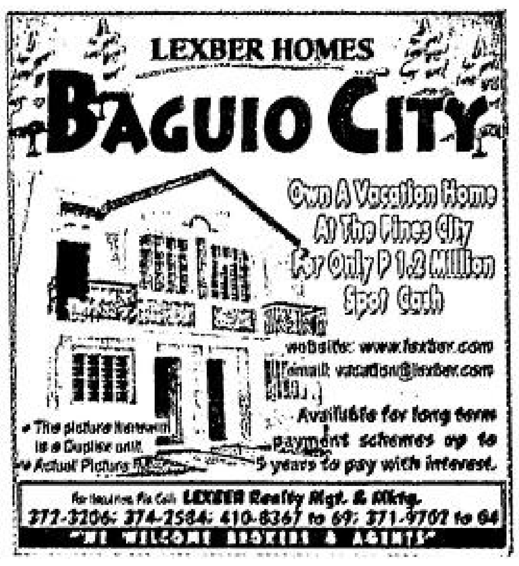
Juliana chooses work over love /C4

JOEL LAMANGAN: The only help we get from government is subtitling our movies. Look at South Korea. It has a law that requires producers to make 3 movies before they are allowed to import one Hollywood blockbuster. In the film festivals I went to, government support was always present.



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'Gov't must see movies as an economic sector'

By Nini Valera

FOR THE local movie industry to prosper, movies must be treated as products that could be marketed abroad.

To do this, Director Joel Lamangan believes that government intervention should happen—now.

Otherwise, "*kawawa ang mga* workers *sa* industry, *ang mga* producers at serious directors."

"The only help we get from the government is in subtitling our movies," he added.

Film can only be progressive with the help of government, according to Lamangan. He points at South Korea as an example of how government intervention transformed the movie industry into an export commodity.

"They're booming now because the government is helping them," Lamangan pointed out.

South Korea has a law that requires film producers to produce three movies before they are allowed to import one Hollywood blockbuster.

"That's why they are prospering," said Lamangan. "I hope it happens here.

"There is an influx of Hollywood films here, and how can you compete with that? You can't. There must be some kind of control somewhere. I don't mean, don't show Hollywood films, but there must be some kind of control.

Legislation

Lamangan looks at legislation as a way to help the industry.

"Government must have an active part in the movie industry," he told INQUIRER Entertainment in an exclusive interview last week. "*Hindi lang* palliative, like giving P50 thousand here. *Dapat*, legislation. These are just palliatives. They are not addressing the real problems of the industry, they are not seeing the problems. They are not doing anything to help it, helping it in terms of many things. There's got to be an ideal way of helping the movie industry through the government.

"There's no help from our government," he stressed. "But government has to help sell the movie. If they do that, they're selling the country. The problem is, the government does not see film as an economic sector. It's only seen as an entertainment sector, to make people laugh and cry. It can be an economic sector, and Korea is looking at film as such."

He cites Thailand as another fertile ground for homegrown films.

"In the film festivals I went to, government support was always present," he observed. "Like, there was a Thailand night and all the festival directors, the Thai producers were there to watch. *Dito, wala kang makikitang ganyan.*

"There is much incentive for filmmakers in other countries. *Dito, walang* serious incentives. *Katulad ng* bananas. The government won't allow an influx of foreign bananas here. *Matatalo ang* local bananas. The same with Hollywood films. There is no way we can compete with them."

Lamangan, however, is not one to give up hope. There is hope in the movies he creates with the passion only a serious filmmaker can muster. Even if it's a comedy, like his most recent, "I Will Survive," for Regal Films, Lamangan tries to reflect a reality.

"In other words, every film is saying something," he said. "In the case of 'I Will Survive,' it's the reality of three women who have problems coping with their realities."

But this time, Lamangan addresses such realities in a comedic manner. He is also a returning to his roots.

"I started as a comedy writer," he disclosed. "I want to go back to that. I have been doing serious films. So why not comedy?"

Even a serious filmmaker like Lamangan needs his fun.

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Retro riot that's utterly escapist and enjoyably unimportant

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

REVIEW

THE LATEST, once-popular TV show to be given the trendy movie remake treatment is "Starsky and Hutch," a weekly series about the misadventures of mismatched cop partners that ran from 1975 to 1979. It may ring a bell with much older viewers, but while many of us haven't actually seen an episode of the famous show, the title is one we have encountered at one point or another.

No matter what. This most recent addition to the growing number of recycled TV ideas into film franchises requires no prior knowledge of the source material. The story of this film version is entirely set in the '70s, unlike the "Charlie's Angels," "SWAT," or "The Brady Bunch" movies, for instance, which transplant old concepts into contemporary settings.

It also reunites one of big-screen comedy's odder couples in recent memory, Ben Stiller and Owen Wilson, so it expectedly translates into a gut-busting parody of the era, directed and co-written by Todd Phillips ("Road Trip").

STILLER, Soul, Glaser (the original Starsky and Hutch) and Wilson

Contrasting methods

Stiller and Wilson were funny together in "Zoolander" a few years back, when they portrayed disturbingly stupid, rival fashion models. Their good cop/bad cop tandem here isn't as dumb, but they come pretty close. Stiller plays David Starsky, an all work-no play Bay City detective who keeps trying hard to prove himself; while Wilson plays Ken "Hutch" Hutchinson, an easygoing undercover cop who's not beyond illegally making a couple of bucks for himself while working.

Starsky and Hutch are forced to bear with each other's contrasting crime-solving methods and personalities, as they investigate a case that involves respected businessman Reese Feldman (Vince Vaughn). Feldman has developed a new, undetectable cocaine variant, and the bumbling duo has the responsibility of proving it and preventing a massive shipment of the drug from getting to the streets.

They meet various characters throughout the wacky investigation, such as Huggy Bear (Snoop Dogg), a mysterious street informant; Big Earl (Will Ferrell), a jailed artist who holds secrets that may lead to Feldman's downfall; and a pair of airhead cheerleaders (Amy Smart and Carmen Electra) who end up as Starsky and Hutch's easily impressed dates. Through it all, the detectives realize that the partnership isn't so bad, that they actually have a bizarre teamwork that gets them results and horny women.

This riotous retro comedy is refreshingly stupid. You won't root for anyone; you'll just sit back as joke after brainless joke effortlessly brings out your penchant for occasional, predictably shallow situational humor to the surface. Feel your brain cells happily waste away, as an unwittingly stoned Starsky battles for disco king supremacy, or as Big Earl demands kinky poses from Hutch in exchange for valuable info!

Non-plot

The non-plot is glued together by a nice soundtrack collecting both classic and kitschy '70s tunes. Artistically, the decade was characterized by experimentation and excessiveness that the movie makes fun of consistently. Heck, even the sight of bulky technology (like the bugging device strapped to Huggy Bear) has its built-in camp factor.

Stiller's over-the-top, furious outbursts are still funny, even when he's done them for the nth time. Wilson, conversely, deadpans here like he does in practically every recent film appearance. In the long run, you won't really care what happens to the characters. You just want them to get into one humiliating and rambunctious situation after another for a number of long laughs. Screw logic and common sense.

The original actors who played Starsky and Hutch (Paul Michael Glaser and David Soul) make brief appearances here, as it is compulsory of movie remakes to give aging ex-stars cameos. That felt insignificant and a little distracting, but it's a necessary nod to fans of the old show. Still, this strange re-introduction of "Starsky and Hutch" to a new generation is worth seeing, if only to experience something utterly escapist and enjoyably unimportant.

Spirit of '67: Rock 'n' roll and fun

By George Vail Kabristante
Contributor

THE SPIRIT of '67, one of the most popular showbands in live entertainment, started out not in 1967 but some 11 years ago. The band, made up mostly of graduates of the Ateneo, sang and played dance music from the '60s at birthdays, weddings, alumni homecoming, fundraising events for their wives, business associates and former classmates.

Today, Spirit of '67 continues to draw unparalleled following as they entertain baby boomers who like to remember their youth to the music of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Stylistics, Abba and the like—music with a lot of rock 'n' roll but without the sex and the drugs.

Silver anniversary

It all started when Atenean Sonny Alvendia planned the silver anniversary celebration of High School Class '67 in 1992. The event witnessed the birth of the Spirit of '67, whose fame quickly spread through word of mouth. Sonny, who used to host regular class reunions at the Jade Vine, an Ermita restaurant that his family owns, thus became the "accidental" manager of the showband.

The group, according to Sonny, is booked up to the end of 2005 for performances that include out-of-town shows as well as in some key cities of Asia. Their hectic schedule allows the Spirit of '67 to perform in only two venues, both in Makati: at the Captain's Bar of the Mandarin every Tuesday night, and at Conway's Bar of the Shangri-la every Thursday.

The members of the band are mostly professionals from business, finance, advertising and entertainment. During a Spirit performance, the crowd always includes a lot of *collegialas* from the '60s who transform themselves into dancing queens, twisting and shouting, boogieing and swinging in place even in a packed dining area. More men are joining the Spirit audiences with their wives and even with their children.

The Spirit of '67 includes vocalist Cholo Santiago, an Atenean. Another vocalist, the only rose among the thorns, is Maso Diez, a graduate of the UP Conservatory of Music who first caught the public attention in the late '70s when she joined the Hot Dog.

Mean falsetto

Lead guitarist Steve de Jesus can play hits from the '60s, including those of the Ventures and the Shadows, even with his eyes closed. He had been playing with showbands overseas when the Spirit of '67 drafted him. Keyboardist Nato Canlas, who moonlights as musical arranger for live performers and recording artists, plays all kinds of music, from pop to rock, R&B to jazz.

Drummer Arnold Austria played for his father's Ludring's Orchestra and other big bands that traveled around the world. Vocalist Bimbo Santiago was a member of The End, which was the most-sought-after Ateneo band for proms and graduation balls in girls' schools in the '60s. The generous girth of the former advertising man is matched by a throaty, booming voice that's perfect for black songs. He also wields a mean falsetto.

Aliw awardee

Vocalist Johnny Velasquez is a product of Stanford University whose high notes make sure that his ex-*collegiala* fans are always swooning and screaming.

Bass guitarist and band leader Jake Arellano has an exceptionally wide vocal range that allows him to hit both high and low notes effortlessly.

Last year, the Spirit of '67 won the Aliw Award for best live group performance in music lounges and bars, besting five of the country's top five bands.

Diana Krall's latest CD

SHOW STOPPER

DIANA Krall illustrates her understanding of the jazz idiom and reveals her talent as songwriter in her latest album, "The Girl In The Other Room," her first effort at original music. Six of the tracks were written by Diana with her husband Elvis Costello.

"I wrote the music and then Elvis and I talked about what we wanted to say. I told him stories and wrote pages and pages of reminiscences, descriptions and images, and he put them into tighter lyrical form," Diana explains.

The album is the first co-produced by Krall and her long-time producer and three time Grammy winner Tommy LiPuma. "The Girl In The Other Room" has brought into full view the marvelous artistry of Diana Krall.

The Black Eyed Peas returns

AFTER a string of hits, The Black Eyed Peas returns with "Hey Mama" from the album Elephunk under Universal Music Philippines.

The song has been receiving heavy spins on top-rated radio stations across the metropolis as well as in music channels. It is currently the group's third top 10 single. The album recently climbed from number 7 to number 2 in the European Billboard Hot 100. To this date, Elephunk has been certified gold in Australia, Finland and France, 2x platinum in Australia and New Zealand and platinum in Denmark and Germany.

The group will arrive in Manila next month. In time for their arrival, a special Asian edition of Elephunk has been released in retail record shops.

UMP has also tied up with Skerchers USA for a radio contest to be aired soon over 99.5 RT and 89.9 WTM Magic. Exciting prizes await the winners.

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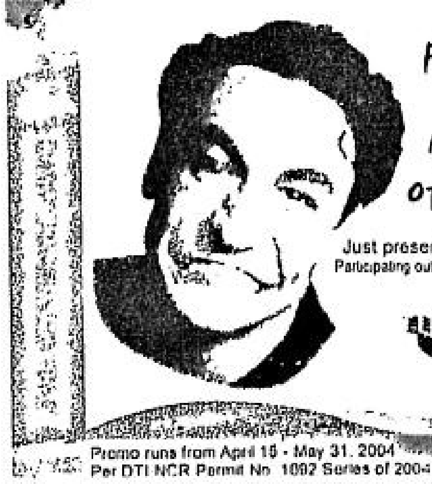

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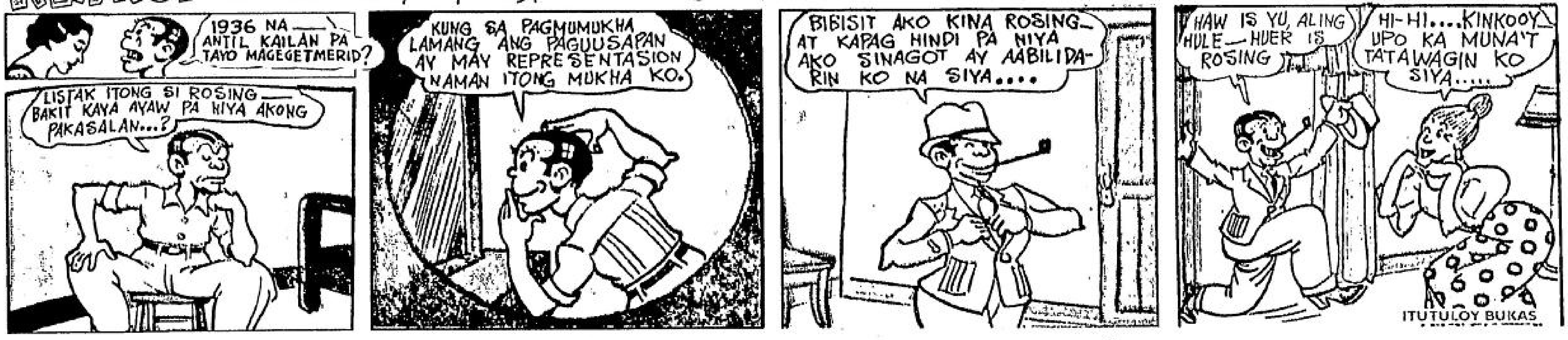
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ITUTULOY BUKAS

Willie Revillame passes muster in new show

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST Tuesday evening, we were pleased to see the "incorrigible" **Willie Revillame** hosting a new game show, "Puso O Pera" on ABC 5. It proved that the controversial comedian-host could keep his naughty tongue in check and do a TV show without getting his producers in hot water.

We admired the new show's producers for giving Willie yet another chance to mend his ways, at a time when others have given him up for lost.

Everybody deserves a second, third and even fourth chance, so it's great that Willie is being afforded yet another opportunity to prove his worth as a program host.

Having said that, we must observe that Willie's work on the new program wasn't all that outstanding. Still, he more than passed muster, so ABC 5's faith in him, *contra mundum*, is definitely not misplaced.

On the other hand, the show's format needs to be spruced up. When we watched the program, it featured teams made up of relatives, like **Gina Alajar** and her son **Ryan Eigenmann**, and brothers **Randy** and **Raymart Santiago** answering quiz questions or performing tasks that had cash prizes attached to them.

We were disappointed to see that most of the questions were rather easy (Where is Diamond Head located?—In Hawaii, of course), and yet the contestants often got their answers wrong. Also, the cash prizes were on the low side, especially for a game show that promised a top prize of P8 million each week! To illustrate, Gina and Ryan topped the preliminary rounds, and yet they won only P27,000 before entering the final round.

With so much money to give away, perhaps the show can up the cash ante for its preliminary rounds? That way, it would be an exciting program to watch from the very start, not just toward its finale.

In any case, the show's excitement level did belatedly rise last Tuesday, when the final round started with a prize of P100,000 for its first question. That was definitely more like it, and viewers got even more involved when the finalist team got the next pair of questions, worth P250,000, right.

They didn't do as well with the next set of questions, but P277,000, their total pot that night, is definitely nothing to sneeze at!

The show has **Patricia Javier** and **Maui Taylor** as Willie's sexy co-hosts, but they don't really do much. Perhaps their participation can be expanded?

And Willie could be given greater leeway to make the show truly his own.—Provided, of course, that he knows his limits, and scrupulously observes them, this time around!

Winning combination

"SCHOOL of Rock" is currently pleasing moviegoers with its winning combination of antic leading man (**Jack Black**), lively scripting (by **Mike White**), and with-it direction (by **Richard Linklater**).

Linklater is known for making movies heavily influenced by rock 'n' roll. That's right up his latest film's alley: "School of Rock" is about a down-and-out musician (Black) who's forced to teach music in an exclusive school. Unknown to the educational institution's officials, he turns his students into rockers who compete in a hot band contest!

'The Last Samurai'

AFTER grossing $360 million worldwide, "The Last Samurai" is now poised to earn more millions with its release this month as a two-disc DVD and VCD.

The package is loaded with special features like director **Edward Zwick**'s video journal, star **Tom Cruise** recounting "A Warrior's Journey," a history channel documentary, a making-of-the-epic featurette, deleted scenes, and a behind-the-scenes look at the movie's costuming and weaponry.

Singer in world tour

MADDELA

WHEN Jed Maddela released his new single "Laging Ikaw" from his debut "I'll Be Around" by Universal Records, he didn't expect the song to be a top 10 item on its first week on radio. Now, the song is zooming to the No. 1 slot.

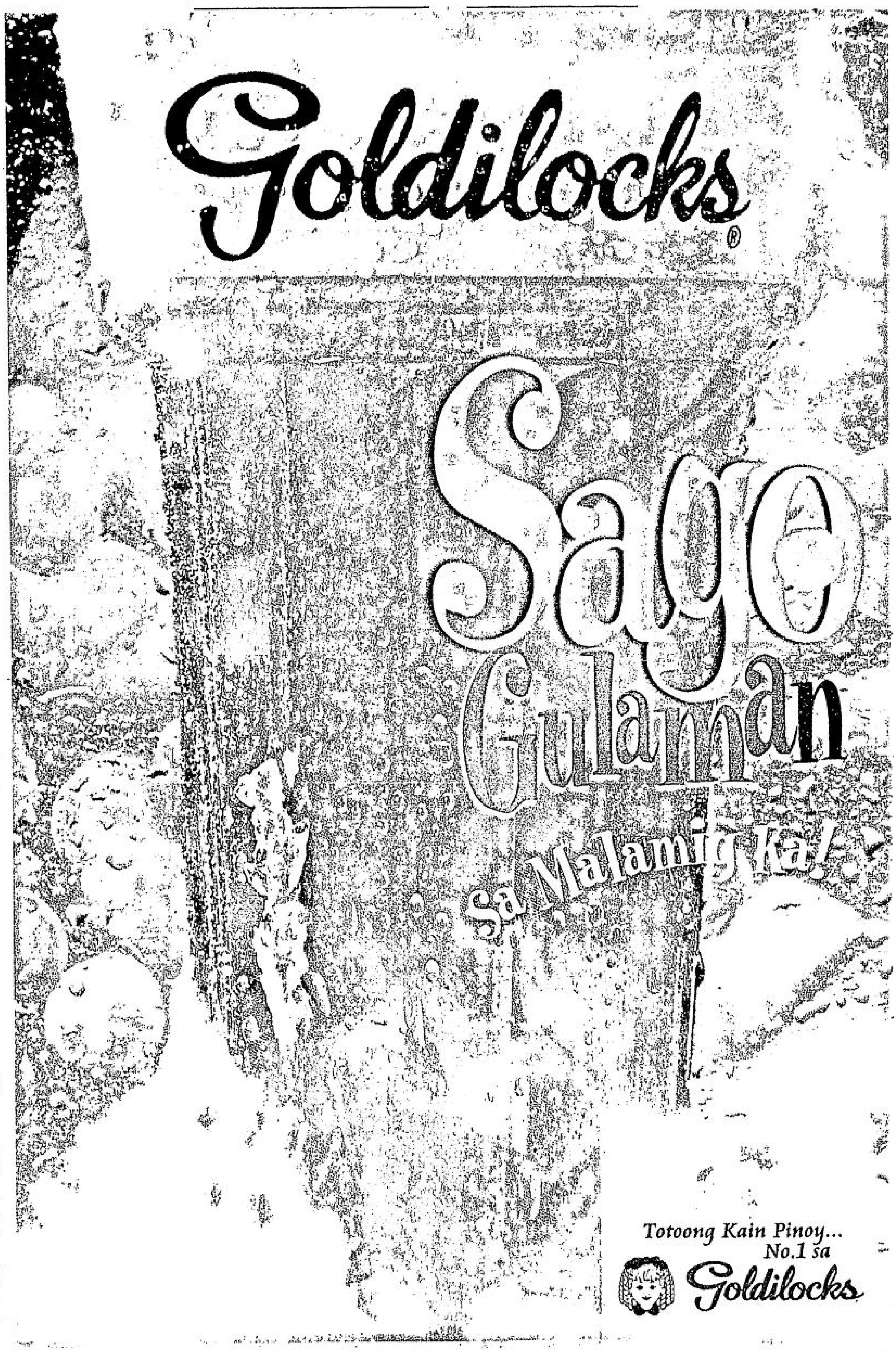
Composed by Boyet Navajas, the song allows Maddela to showcase his vocal range. There's no doubt that his pure voice and heartwarming rendition has catapulted "Laging Ikaw" to the top of the charts. Madella is now being referred to as "Mr. Pure Voice."

An artist of international caliber, Maddela will soon be embarking on a world tour. He is top billed in the "East Meets West" musical concerts featuring leading talents from Europe, America and Asia.

He has reaped international acclaim, winning the Silver Prize in the Voice of Asia International Song Festival in Kazakhstan, Russia. He was named the Best Voice of Asia Male Singer for 2003 by Mainhill Awards in the same country.

The Celebrity Chronicle in Hollywood, California awarded him the "Breakthrough Male Performer of the Year 2003."

Maddela's "I'll Be Around" album, which contains the single "Let Me Love You (From The Bottom Of My Heart)" will be repackaged with additional new songs.



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Huwag palagpasin ang bawat minuto ng halalang bayan.

A YELLOW fleece jacket is part of her high school wardrobe.

WHITE embroidered stretch skirt, a souvenir from Miss Ponds contest

A PAIR of shorts from her sister with a bigger butt

ONE of Juliana's favorite things is this blouse from Folded & Hung.

Juliana chooses work over love

'LITTLE Devil' on pink thongs, and 'Lakers' on yellow pair

'At 14, I was already working and picking clothes for myself. I started doing my own laundry when I was 13.''

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Ernie U. Sarmiento

SEXY actress Juliana Palermo would rather concentrate on work than reconcile with former boyfriend, basketball player Mark Caguioa.

Juliana, 18, says she broke up with Mark, 22, because the PBA cager's family did not approve of their relationship.

"He said he would fight for me no matter what," Juliana tells INQUIRER Entertainment in an interview in her two-story home in San Juan.

"But honestly, I'd rather focus on my work than carry on with the relationship. There are so many things going on for me right now," she confides.

The actress, who was introduced in Tikoy Aguiluz's "www.xxx.com" in 2003, says she is busy with television appearances. "It's like I'm making up for the times I was away because I was watching his games," Juliana says.

Although Juliana admits that they spend a lot of time together, the actress insists that she and Mark are not together.

"He just accompanies me to tapings when he's free," Juliana says of Mark, Barangay Ginebra's shooting guard. "That's why people thought he was my stalker.

"I appreciate the effort. But he knows my situation. I cannot have a boyfriend right now because of my work."

Born in Davao, Juliana left for the United States when she was 11. She lived with her mom and sister in Glendale, California.

After graduating from Hollywood High School, she went back to the Philippines, "because I wanted to see what kind of life I can have here," she explains, "even if it means living by myself."

In Davao, Juliana joined a local beauty search and was crowned Miss Kadayawan 2002. She also represented Davao City in a Miss Pond's contest.

OUT OF THE CLOSET

Juliana left Davao for Manila, where she landed some modeling stints and was offered to play the role of Joana, an online prostitute in "www.xxx.com" for Maverick Films.

She has since become a columnist of the local franchise of FHM. Her column is called "Sex Confidential."

"I'm very independent," says Juliana. "I never depended on my mom just so I could buy what I want.

"That's why at 14, I was already working and picking clothes for myself," she says. "In fact, I started doing my own laundry when I was 13."

Juliana has just moved in to her two-bedroom house in San Juan during this Out of the Closet visit. A house help comes every morning to cook for her.

"*Wala pa akong gamit*," says Juliana as she ushers INQUIRER Entertainment into her living room, which, at that time, had nothing but a huge bean bag and some framed paintings on the wall.

"The condo that I used to live in was fully furnished," she explains. "So all I had to buy then was what I needed for my bedroom."

Lingerie. "I wear thongs and nothing else. I hate it when panty lines are visible. For thongs, *gusto ko medyo* stringy, like this one with the words 'little devil' printed on it. My mom sent them to me.

"My mom also gave me a couple of 'Lakers' thongs. I don't wear them. I just keep them as a remembrance. It's sort of an LA pride *lang*.

"I stole several thongs from my sister. These are the kinds that you receive during bridal showers. They are lacy and have huge slits in the middle. I don't wear them, of course. I just like looking at them.

"I bought this red lingerie from Fredericks of Hollywood, which is like the more popular Victoria's Secret. I got this when I was 15. *Nag-iisa lang ito*. It's a push-up bra, *pero* push *lang*. No cover for your boobs (laughs)."

Blouses. "This pink top from Folded & Hung is one of my favorites. I bought this at Robinson's Galleria. I don't wear it. It's just not me. I just like looking at it because I like the way the fabric flows.

"I took home a couple of my costumes in the movie. They are lacy, spaghetti-strapped tops. I don't use them. I keep them as remembrance."

Skirt. "I don't like wearing skirts. But I still keep this white embroidered stretch from Milkway because this is the only thing I got from joining Miss Ponds. I still don't know what kind of top would match it."

High school clothes. "I used to wear this black knitted jacket to school. I bought this at Ligali at the Glendale Galleria. That's where I worked when I was 14.

"I'm not fond of wearing jackets, especially here in the Philippines. But I still keep this yellow fleece jacket that I used to wear in high school. I love the color yellow. I even have yellow tennis shoes to go with it.

"This floral pants is one of my most expensive pairs. It's from XOXO. I still fits me, but I don't wear it anymore. It's too psychedelic."

Dress. "I don't keep too many dresses in my closet, except this lavender dress that I wore during my sister Sharon's wedding. I was 13 then. I was the maid of honor."

Jeans. "I have a hard time finding the perfect jeans because my legs are too skinny. If a pair does fit my legs, most of the time *bitin*. If the length is right, *maluwag naman*. I bought my favorite pair in Greenhills. It's a hipster and it's perfect."

Shoes. "I'm not the type who wears rubber shoes. I'd rather wear slippers or a nice pair of slip-ons. But the pair from Sketchers is my favorite rubber shoes because it was given by a special someone. I hardly wear it. I find wearing tennis shoes more comfortable.

"My manager (Jojo Gabinete) told me '*magpakababae ka nga!*' So I try to wear high-heeled shoes more often. I wore my pink wrap-around sandals once and never wore it again. *Dumihin kasi*. It was supposed to match the pink top from F&H. I wore it to the press preview of my debut movie."

Bags. "A bag with the number 85 printed on it was the first bag that a friend gave to me. I like it because 85 was the year I was born."

"My sister gave me a bag made from snake skin, with matching pair of sandals. I never got to wear the sandals here in the Philippines, but I still use the bag once in a while. I prefer shoulder bags over handbags. My work requires that I put a lot of things in one bag, *para hindi magulo*. The bag has to be big and sturdy, too."

Shorts. "I don't like wearing shorts but I noticed that I've been using a lot of them to tapings lately. Maybe because its summer. I stole a pair from my sister. I remember her warning me not to use it because it's very expensive. So I took it. She probably doesn't know that it's with me. Unfortunately, I don't get to wear it because it doesn't fit me nicely. Her butt is bigger than mine (laughs)."

ONLY thongs for Juliana who hates panty lines on her clothes

LACY, spaghetti-strapped tops from 'www.xxx.com'

FHM
FOR PRESID

RED lingerie from Fredericks of Hollywood, which pushes up her boobs, but does not cover them at all. A favorite garment, which Juliana says, she bought when she was only 15.

NOT the type who wears rubber shoes, Juliana prefers these pink slip-ons.

FLORAL prints on pants from XOXO

THE NUMBER 85 on this bag makes it more important for Juliana, who was born in 1985.

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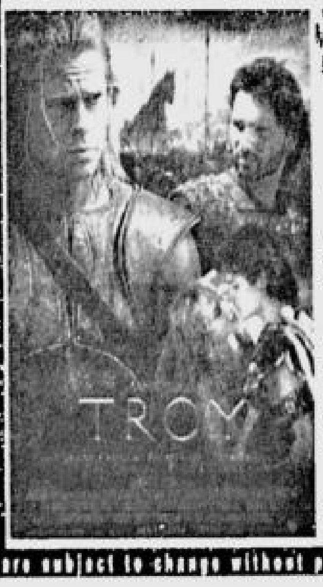

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2 HELLBOY
3 PAY CHECK
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIS
5 WHOLE 10 YARD
6 STARSKY & HUTCH
7 MAN OF FIRE
8 BOOBITA ROSE
9 SCHOOL OF ROC
10 PETER PA

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687 6963 or 72
1 HELLBOY
2 MAN OF FIRE
3 STARSKY & HUTC
4 SCHOOL OF ROC

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 833.3274
1 ANIMAL
2 STARSKY & HUTC
3 HELLBOY

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5 WHOLE 10 YARD
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M star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel 873.5004
1 ANIMAL
2 ACACI

PREMIERE CINEMA
(Makati City) tel 892.2503
THX

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376
1
2
3
4

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588
5 RESERVE
6
7
8
9

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781
1 CLOSE FOR RENOVATION
2 CLOSE FOR RENOVATION
3 CLOSE FOR RENOVATION
4 HELLBOY
5 STARSKY & HUTCH
6 ANIMAL
7 MAN OF FIRE
8 CHECK INN
9 BOOBITA ROSE

Gotesco Commonwealth
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1 RESERVE
2
3
4
5

Gotesco Ortigas
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2 SPARTAN
3 WHOLE 10 YARD
4 ANIMAL
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1 RESERVE

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1 MAN ON FIRE
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3 ANIMAL
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1 WHOLE 10 YARD
2 MAN ON FIRE
3 ANIMA
4 STARSKY & HUTCH
5 HELLBO

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 . 879.2029
1 ANIMAL
2 TORO

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2 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3 MAN OF FIRE
4 STARSKY & HUTCH
5 WHOLE 10 YARD
6 HELLBO
7 SCHOOL OF ROC

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 HELLBO
2 ACACI
3 PETER PAN
4 STARSKY & HUTC

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 STARSKY & HUT
2 HELLBO
3 PETER PAN
4 BOOBITA ROS

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
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Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926
1 STARSKY & HUTC
2 ANIMA
3 HELLBO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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1 MAN OF FIR
2 STARSKY & HUTC
3 HELLB
4 UNINVITE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
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1 STARSKY & HUTC
2 HELLBO
3 MAN OF FI
4 UNINVITE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
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4 PASSION OF CHRIS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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1 PETER PA
2 TAKING LIVE
3 HELLBO

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2 ANIMA
3 TEENAGE SEDUCTIO
4 LOVE KITA BILIB KA P

Lianas MovieCity
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1 HELLBO
2 ANIMA
3 MAN OF FI
4 UNINVITE
5 STARSKY & HUTC

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 ANIMA
2 MAN OF FI

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 STARSKY & HUTC
2 MAN OF FI
3 ANIMA

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 PASSION OF CHRIS
2 BOOBITA ROS
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4 PASSION OF CHRI

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Aria—The Opera Album is personally important to Andrea. This is the music he wants to share with people because it is based on his earliest memories of growing up and appreciating music.

Sogno is a pop album of entirely original compositions that evoke traditional and modern influences. It features prestigious collaborations, from duets with Celine Dion and Eros Ramazzotti, to compositions of Eunio Morricone.

Verdi is a fantastic collection of the greatest songs by Italy's most famous composer sung by Andrea Bocelli with the Israeli Philharmonic conducted by Zubin Mehta. The CD commemorates the 100th year death anniversary of Italian romantic composer Guiseppe Verdi.

Aria is Bocelli's first international classical album that became one of the most successful classical albums ever. It dominated the classical charts and scaled the international pop album charts in 1998.

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Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX

Ali 3	HELLBOY
Ali 4	STARSKY & HUTCH
Ali 5	THE WHOLE TEN YARDS
Ali 6	SCHOOL OF ROCK
Ali 7	MAN ON FIRE

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MAY 16	PBA : PUREFOODS VS. TALK 'N' TEXT
MAY 18	NCA 7-COCK DERBY

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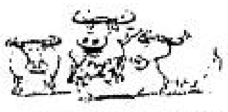

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

For inquiries, call:
687-6963 • 687-6972
RESERVED SEATING
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Cinema	Movie	Schedule	Rating
1	HELLBOY	11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30	PG-13
2	STARSKY & HUTCH	11:40, 1:50, 4:00 6:10, 8:20, 10:30	PG-13
3	MAN ON FIRE	11:00, 1:55, 4:55 7:55, 10:00	R-18
4	SCHOOL OF ROCK	12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40	PG-13

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Cinema	Movie	Schedule	Rating
1	MAN ON FIRE	10:40, 1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00	R18
2	STARSKY & HUTCH	10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00	P13

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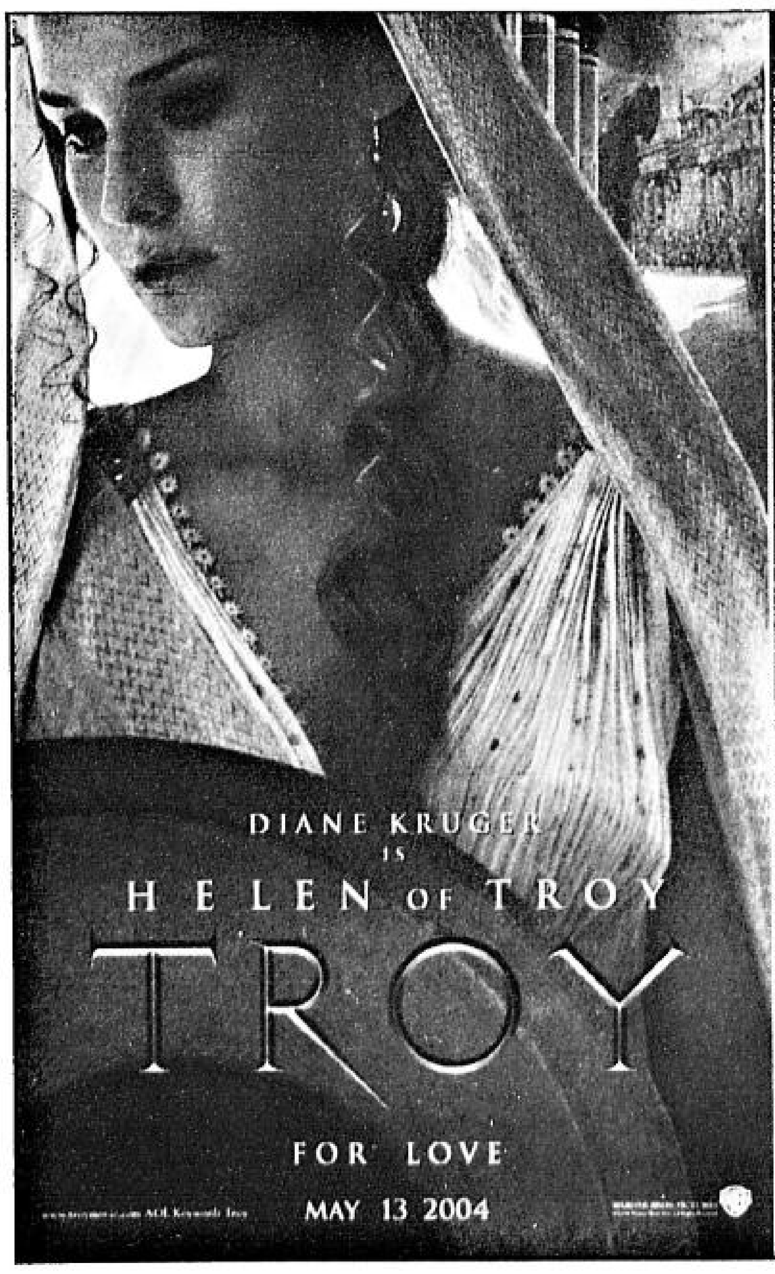

"They're coming for me, the wind is bringing them closer."

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Cinema	Movie	Schedule
CINEMA 1 THX	HELLBOY	11:20, 1:55, 4:30, 7:05, 9:40
2	THE WHOLE TEN YARDS	10 35, 12 50, 3 05, 5 20, 7.35, 9 50
3	MAN OF FIRE	10.15, 1 10, 4 05, 7 00, 9 65
4	PAYCHECK	11 35, 1 50, 4 05, 6 20, 8 35, 10.30
5	STARSKY AND HUTCH	10 35, 12 50, 3 05, 5 20, 7 35, 9 50
6	SCHOOL OF ROCK	10 35, 12.50, 3 05, 5 20, 7.35, 9 50
7	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB	11 55, 2.05, 4.15, 6 25, 8 35, 10 30
8	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	12 40, 3 20, 6 10, 9 00
9	HAUNTED SPIRIT	12 20, 2.25, 4 30, 6 35, 8 40, 10 30
10	SPARTAN	12 40, 3 00, 5 20, 7.40, 10 00

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
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ERMITA
526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

Cinema	Movie	Schedule
1	HELLBOY	11:00, 1:35, 4:10, 6:45, 9:40
2	HAUNTED SPIRIT	11.15, 1 05, 2 55, 4 45, 6 35, 8 25, 10 00
3	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB	10 50, 1 00, 3.10, 5 20, 7 30, 9 40
4	MAN ON FIRE	10.10, 1 00, 3 50, 6 40, 9 50
5	SCHOOL OF ROCK	10 50, 1 00, 3 10, 5 20, 7 30, 9.40
6	STARSKY AND HUTCH	10.10, 12.25, 2 40, 4 55, 7 10, 9.40
7	THE WHOLE TEN YARDS	10 30, 12.25, 2 20, 4 15, 6 10, 8 05, 10 00

Big R Supercenter METRO EAST
682-8193/99 / 682-8280

Cinema	Movie	Schedule
1	THE WHOLE TEN YARDS	11.50, 2.10, 4 30, 6 50, 9.10
2	MAN ON FIRE	12 00, 3.00, 6 00, 9 00
3	TAKING LIVES	10 40, 12 50, 3 00, 5 10, 7 20, 9 30
4	STARSKY AND HUTCH	12 30, 3 00, 5 30, 8 00, 10 30
5	HELLBOY	10 05, 12 05, 2 15, 4 25, 6:40, 9 00
6	SCHOOL OF ROCK	10 05, 12 05, 2 15, 4 25, 6 40, 9 00
7	PAYCHECK	10 10, 12 20, 2 30, 4 40, 6.50, 9.10
8	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB	11 00, 1 00, 3 00, 5 00, 7 00, 9 00

Big R Supercenter NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW
935-3229 / 31

Cinema	Movie	Schedule
1	SCHOOL OF ROCK	11 35, 1 40, 3:45, 5:50, 8:10
2	HELLBOY	1.35, 3 50, 6 05, 8.30
3	STARSKY AND HUTCH	11 20, 1 35, 3 50, 6.05, 8 30
4	MAN ON FIRE	11 45, 2.35, 5 25, 8 30
5	THE WHOLE TEN YARDS	12 00, 2 00, 4 00, 6 00, 8.10
6	HAUNTED SPIRIT	12 00, 2 00, 4 00, 6 00, 8 10
7	PAYCHECK	10 20, 12 45, 3 10, 5 35, 8 10
8	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB	11 35, 1 40, 3 45, 5 50, 8.10

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1 MAN OF FIRE
2 STARSKY AND HUTCH
3 SCHOOL OF ROCK
4 ANIMAL

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1 MAN OF FIRE
2 SCHOOL OF ROCK
3 ANIMAL
4 STARSKY AND HUTCH

Big R Supercenter STA. ROSA
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1 HELLBOY
2 STARSKY AND HUTCH
3 ANIMAL
4 THE UNINVITED
5 MAN ON FIRE

Big R Supercenter LIPA
757-3664 / 312-5870

1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 THE UNINVITED
3 TWISTED
4 CHECK-INN
5 HELLBOY

Big R Supercenter DASMARIÑAS
852-2125

1 MAN OF FIRE
2 KARIBAL
3 STARSKY AND HUTCH
4 PETER PAN
5 HELLBOY

Big R Supercenter STARMILLS
San Fernando Pampanga
875-1927 / 961-5270

1 PETER PAN
2 CHECK-INN
3 THE MISSING
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
5 STARSKY AND HUTCH
6 HELLBOY

IMUS
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1 HELLBOY
2 THE WHOLE TEN YARDS
3 STARSKY AND HUTCH
4 MAN ON FIRE
5 SCHOOL OF ROCK
6 ANIMAL

BACOLOD
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2 PETER PAN
3 PAYCHECK
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
5 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
6 50 FIRST DATES

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MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Hugh Jackman . . .

From page C8

in her own right who wants to avenge her ancestors.

The $148-million movie, which boasts of 980 spectacular special effects shots, is a 19th century tale of a conflicted monster hunter who roams the world to rid it of its nightmarish creatures. In the end, though, he finds himself to be the global outcast, the fugitive, the loner, even called a murderer.

Asked how he approached his character, Jackman states, "I started reading all the books on Dracula and Van Helsing. The movie's version is different because in this film, Van Helsing is incredibly good at what he does. He is pretty cool and tough and that is what makes it interesting for me as an actor. He also has some monsters within himself that he battles. He is lonely, too, and what is painful is when others cannot see or understand that. They do not see the painful things hidden within him."

The youngest of five siblings, Jackman admits that he had his own "monsters" to deal with. "I was the shortest, the weakest and the youngest in a brood of five brothers. I found myself always trying to call attention to myself and trying to prove myself," he discloses.

Since the movie is dealing with the eternal battle of good and evil, Jackman points out, "Good and evil reside in all of us. It permeates in everything that we do, from the jobs that we take to the everyday decisions that we make."

BECKINSALE

Although he broke into the American movie scene playing the Wolverine character in the "X-Men" movies and is now poised to create an even bigger impact as the crossbow-wielding hero Van Helsing, Jackman clarifies that "these may be very masculine roles but they are not the only roles that I am looking for. Yes, they are fun to do because they are quite macho, tough and unafraid. But they are also very challenging roles."

He says that one of his most difficult scenes "and indeed one of the most impressive in the movie" was the scene where Van Helsing was thrown from the driver's seat of a coach and landed between two of the six horses that were pulling the now out of control coach at full gallop.

"I was lying in between the back of two horses and I am holding on to the bridles like this (he puts his arms up and pretends to be holding tightly onto the bridles) and of course, I am trying to look heroic and cool but all I wanted to actually say was, 'Ouch, ouch, whoa!'" he narrates now with amusement but it must have been really tough during that shoot.

"Then on the fourth take, I realized that if I let go of these horses who don't understand a single word of English, I'd be under the carriage. I would actually be dead," he discloses. "A. Rondell, our stunt coordinator, could actually begin a cult. He has the coolest eyes. He would look into your eyes and say, almost hypnotically, 'You are going to jump off that cliff now!' He really makes it fun for all of us."

Is it true that he has been offered to be the next James Bond?

He smiles and quips, "I actually started that rumor. Seriously, it's all hypothetical at the moment."

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For more information on Sun Cellular's service plans and features, visit its website at www.suncellular.com.ph or call its 24-hour hotline number at 395-8000.

INQUIRER EMPLOYEE IS BADMINTON CHAMPION

Inquirer's VP for marketing Donald Lim (extreme left) and tournament director EG Lim (extreme right) awarded the runner-up trophy to Lizzie Arce of Team Whisper and championship trophy to Inqurier's Margie dela Vega of Team Nestle for Class E9 during the initial and successful staging of Whisper-Summer's Eve All Ladies Badminton Cup held at Yonex Phils Badminton Club. The event drew more than 200 players including badminton aficionados, models, celebrities and beauty queens. Inquirer Badminton was a proud media sponsor of the said event.

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

WHOLE TEN YARDS R13 1:20, 3:25, 5:30, 7:35, 9:40
SCHOOL OF ROCK PG13 12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:10, 9:30
STARSKY AND HUTCH PG13 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
MAN OF FIRE R18 12:55, 4:00, 7:05, 10:20
HELLBOY PG13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00
STARSKY AND HUTCH PG13 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30

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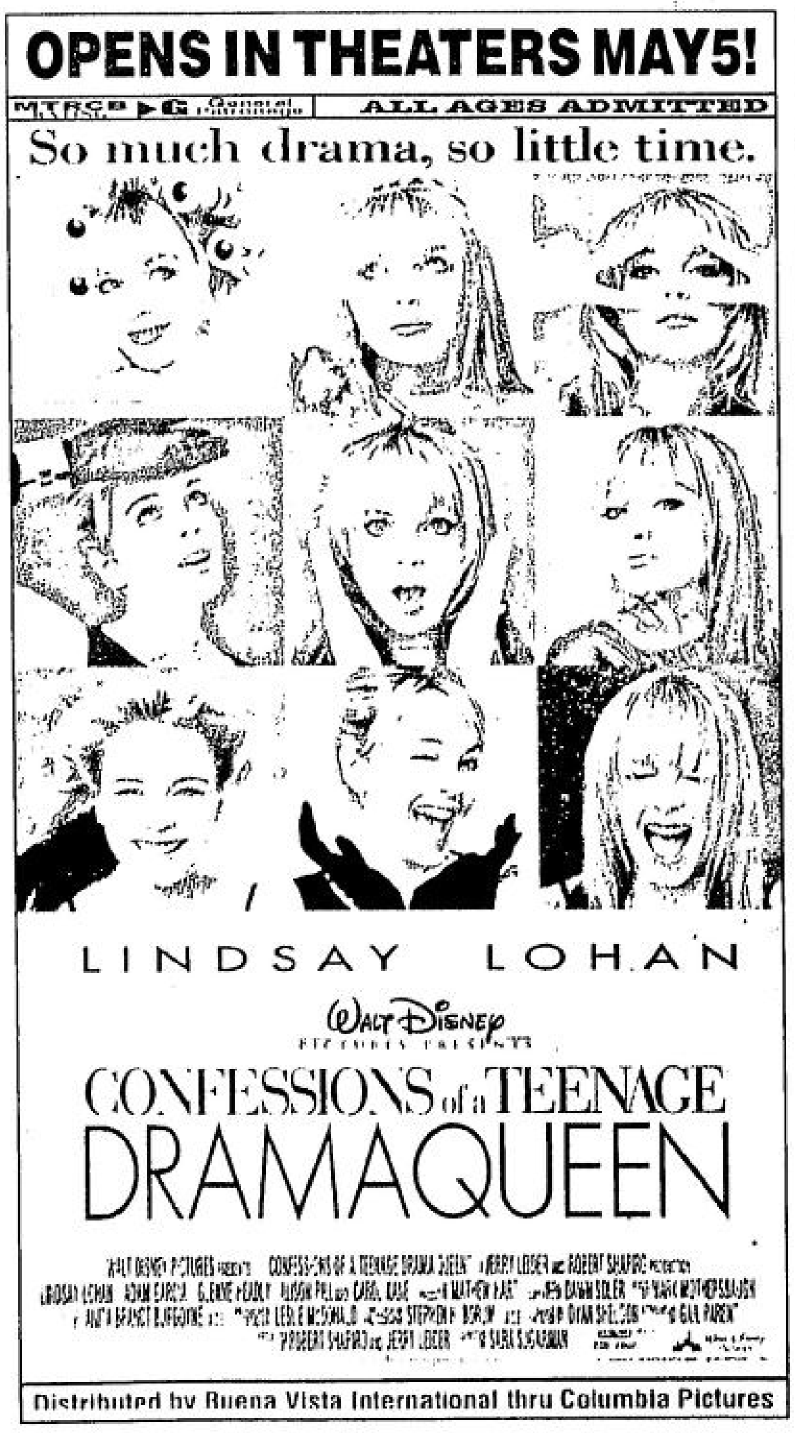
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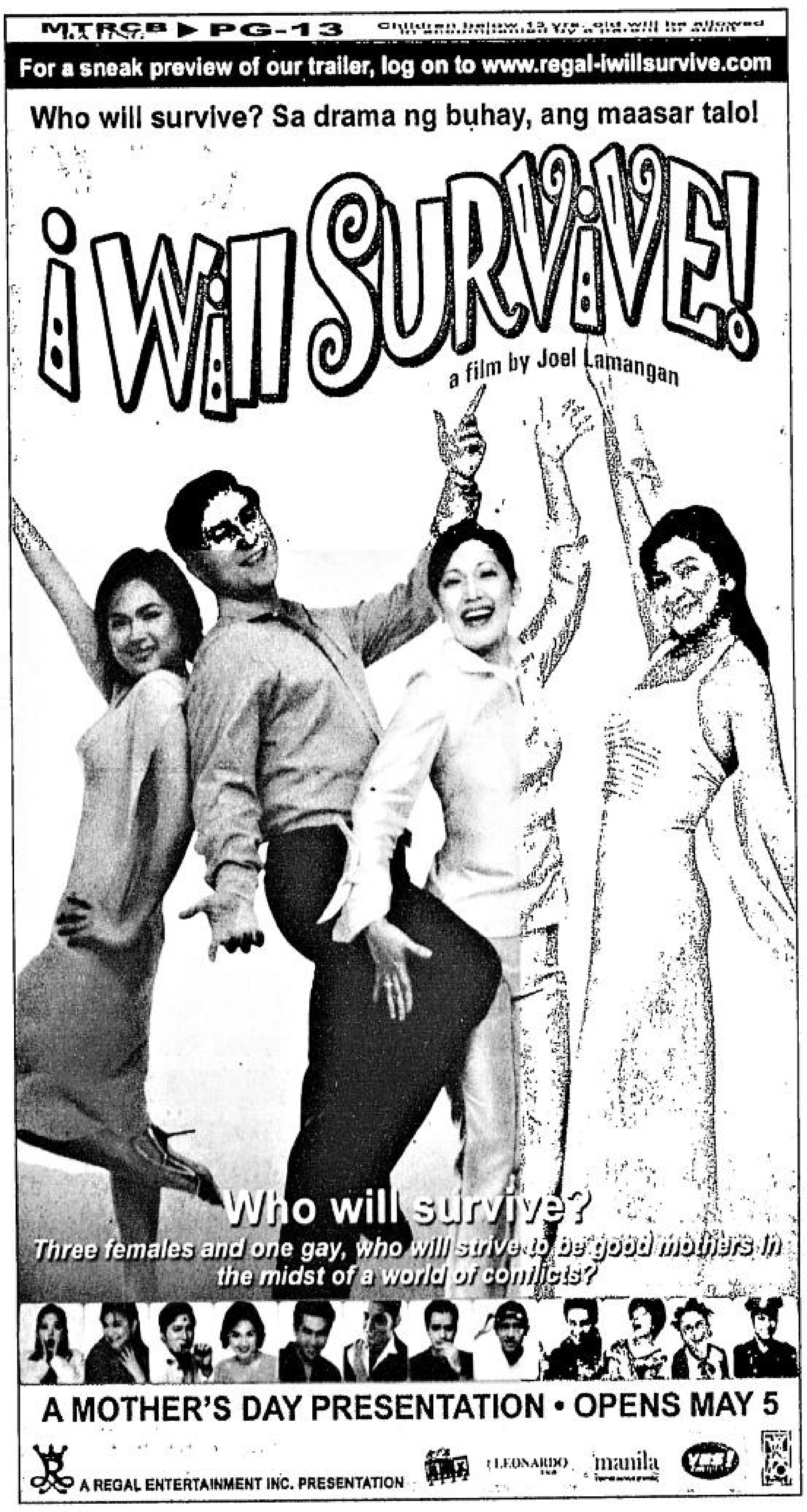
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ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY : LEGEND OF [illegible]
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	ANIMAL
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	ANIMAL
B	CLOSED
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
CINEMA-2	ANIMAL
CINEMA-3	SPARTAN
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	DEATH CURSE
CINEMA-6	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
CINEMA-7	CHECK INN
CINEMA-8	ACACIA
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HELLBOY
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	STARSKY & HUTCH
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SCHOOL OF ROCK
CINEMA-12	WHOLE 10 YARDS
CINEMA-14	MAN ON FIRE
CINEMA-15	TAKING LIVES
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PIÑAS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-1	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
CINEMA-2	BUTTERFLY EFFECTS
CINEMA-4	BONE SNATCHER
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

JACKMAN as the young Van Helsing is cooler, hipper than the old one. But he battles the same creeps and monsters in the movie.

Hugh Jackman battles his own monsters

By Janet Susan R. Nepales
LA Correspondent

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

NEW YORK—Don't ever tell Hugh Jackman that he is a sex symbol.

"Just because a woman in the audience threw a red thong at me onstage does not qualify me as a sex symbol."

He refuses to answer questions on the "sex symbol" tag, so how does one explain the titillated female fans of all shapes, sizes and ages screaming every time he took off his shirt in his current Broadway musical, "The Boy from Oz," or every time he appears bare chested in his latest epic action-adventure movie, "Van Helsing"?

Probably I should also ignore the 6-foot-2 and 210 pounds of solid-as-steel body of Jackman which elicits "oohs" and "ahhs" from both the stage audience and moviegoers.

The appeal of this talented, good-looking and charming Australian hunk is such that women gather outside of the Imperial Theatre after each stage performance to get a glimpse, autograph or a kiss from the charismatic actor who usually comes out still sweaty from his very demanding performance.

A lady from Connecticut, Sonny, who threw the red thong onstage at Jackman in the matinee performance of "The Boy from Oz" that I watched, was there to have her thong (which Jackman returned to her after he picked it up and wore it, yes, wore it onstage, over his pants) autographed (which he did).

One male journalist commented that his girlfriend saw the show a couple of weeks ago and she boldly said to him, "I feel like I've just been made love to by Hugh Jackman for two and half hours."

But no, Jackman tells me, this does not qualify him as a "sex symbol."

A father of a 3-year-old boy, Oscar, Jackman discloses in another interview that he is a doting daddy, too. "I pick up my son from nursery school a few hours before I go to the theater to do the show," he bared. "We have time to bond for a couple of hours."

So, we talk instead to Jackman about being an action hero, the man who saves the world from monsters, the man they call Van Helsing.

He tells us how he ended up with such a big project.

"Up to now, I still cannot believe that I was director Stephen Sommers' first choice for the role. I was probably the only one who said yes," Jackman amusedly says when we interview him at the Regency Hotel in Park Avenue.

The star of such international hits as "X-Men" and its equally successful sequel, "X2: X-Men United," reveals that he was already an admirer of Sommers' work ("The Mummy," The Mummy Returns," "The Scorpion King") even before Sommers handed him the draft of the script to read.

Dressed in a gray short-sleeved shirt that reveals his well-defined biceps, Jackman seems to be more cautious and succinct this afternoon as compared to his flamboyant and deliciously reckless persona as "The Boy from Oz" the day before.

Flattered

"Stephen (Sommers) is a great storyteller not only onscreen but also off-screen," comments the latest Australian hottie. "He is very persuasive and I think he does the greatest pitch in Hollywood. He just handed me the first draft on our first meeting and told me that he did not have anybody else in mind but me. I was really flattered."

He adds, though, that he accepted the part because he has always wanted to do something of this magnitude. "I have always wanted to do a big action-adventure movie like Errol Flynn's classics and this movie has the same qualities," Jackman says.

As Gabriel Van Helsing, Jackman totes a gas-powered crossbow and a whirling buzz-saw-like weapon called a "tojo blade." He is a younger, hipper, cooler version of the Dr. Abraham Van Helsing who is 60 years old in the "Dracula" book.

While Dr. Van Helsing is a Dutch professor, Jackman's Van Helsing works for the Catholic Church to battle all kinds of evil.

"Van Helsing is the reluctant hero. He carries out his solitary mission to battle monsters which he thinks he is born to do," Jackman explains.

The legendary Van Helsing used knives, wooden stake and rifle while the young Van Helsing used what director-writer-producer Sommers describes as "awesome arsenal of monster-killing weaponry" or simply called "creep-stoppers."

Creeps

Jackman gets a chance to encounter characters like Count Dracula (Richard Roxburgh of "Moulin Rouge"), Frankenstein's Monster (Shuler Hensley of "Oklahoma!") and the Wolf Man or Velkan (Gap hunk and ballet dancer Will Kemp of "Swan Lake" and "Cinderella"). Imagine all these creeps in one movie—and all being pursued by Van Helsing.

Although the book did not have any romantic involvement for Van Helsing, Jackman's young Gabriel Van Helsing has some romantic encounters with his vampire-hunter/partner (portrayed by "Underworld's" Kate Beckinsale). As the feisty and beautiful Anna Valerious, one of the last of a powerful royal family, now nearly annihilated by Dracula, Beckinsale is a fearless hunter

HUGH/ C7

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**
Subsection Editor **Lito Zulueta**

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
LIFESTYLE

Nick Joaquin's apocalypse: the last days of a giant

St. Nick in heaven? What an apt portrait of his artistic mission to limn and mold the true portrait of the Filipino soul

By Lito B. Zulueta

IN the weeks preceding his death last Friday, Nick Joaquin had made himself scarce from the public, confining himself to his modest tumbledown house in San Juan, refusing even to see friends such as Elena Roco, Gregorio Brillantes, and F. Sionil Jose and wife Tessie.

The last would regularly call Nick's nephews, his household companions, to check on the writer, and would always learn that Nick, the poster boy of the soused-up beer generation, was stubbornly subsisting on a diet of beer and more tankards of beer, eating little food.

Tessie Jose would prescribe corrective nutrition and vitamin supplements, bring food and soup to the house herself, plead with Nick's nephews to tell him to eat and be merry, rather than drink, think dark thoughts and waste away.

But Nick had obviously made up his mind to die. Since it seems death wouldn't stop for him, he kindly stopped for it—with a mug of beer in hand. For once, his utter sense of life had failed him. Bacchanalia had given way to melancholia. The writer who was born on the merry month of May did not have anymore the spirit to prevail and endure. He would have been 87 on May 4.

Last appearance

One of his final public appearances was last October when, on his request, Frankie Sionil Jose hosted a reception for him and young writers at the latter's Solidaridad Bookshop. He had wanted to meet the young writers of today, and Frankie, playing his other role as a literary impresario, gathered the more promising and exciting new voices in literature. Frankie and Tessie prepared a feast of Middle Eastern delights and European cheeses and cold cuts while Nick brought his favorite *lechon*.

The meeting had a Parnassian, prophetic ring to it. Here was the grand old man of Philippine letters who had played literary mentor to such important writers as Brillantes, Jose Lacaba, Renato Madrid (Monsignor Rodolfo Villanueva of Cebu), now meeting the younger generation of writers who would continue tracing the pen from where he would leave off.

The young ones eagerly gathered around Joaquin, asking him to autograph dog-eared copies of his books. He obliged with a flourish. It was a literary passing of the baton, if there was one. It was the end of an era and the start of a new one.

In the middle of it, however, Nick suddenly asked to be excused. "I feel too old and they are so young," he told the Joses. Almost frantically, he went down the stairs, and Tessie was barely able to shove a ball of cheese into his hand for him to take home.

By the time his nephew had helped him into the car, the cheese was gone (he had obviously dropped it). Instead of going to his favorite Ermita beer joint, Calle Cinco, as he was wont to do after dropping by Solidaridad, Nick slumped into the back seat and dozed off. He was apparently exhausted by the excitement. He had seen the future and found it exhilarating.

Nostalgia and romanticism

But it was not always that the young writers took to him with the same eagerness of those who gathered around him last October. In the '90s, several writers at a conference in UP took him to task for his cultural history and other writings that allegedly exalted the Philippines' Spanish heritage based on cozy notions of nostalgia and romanticism.

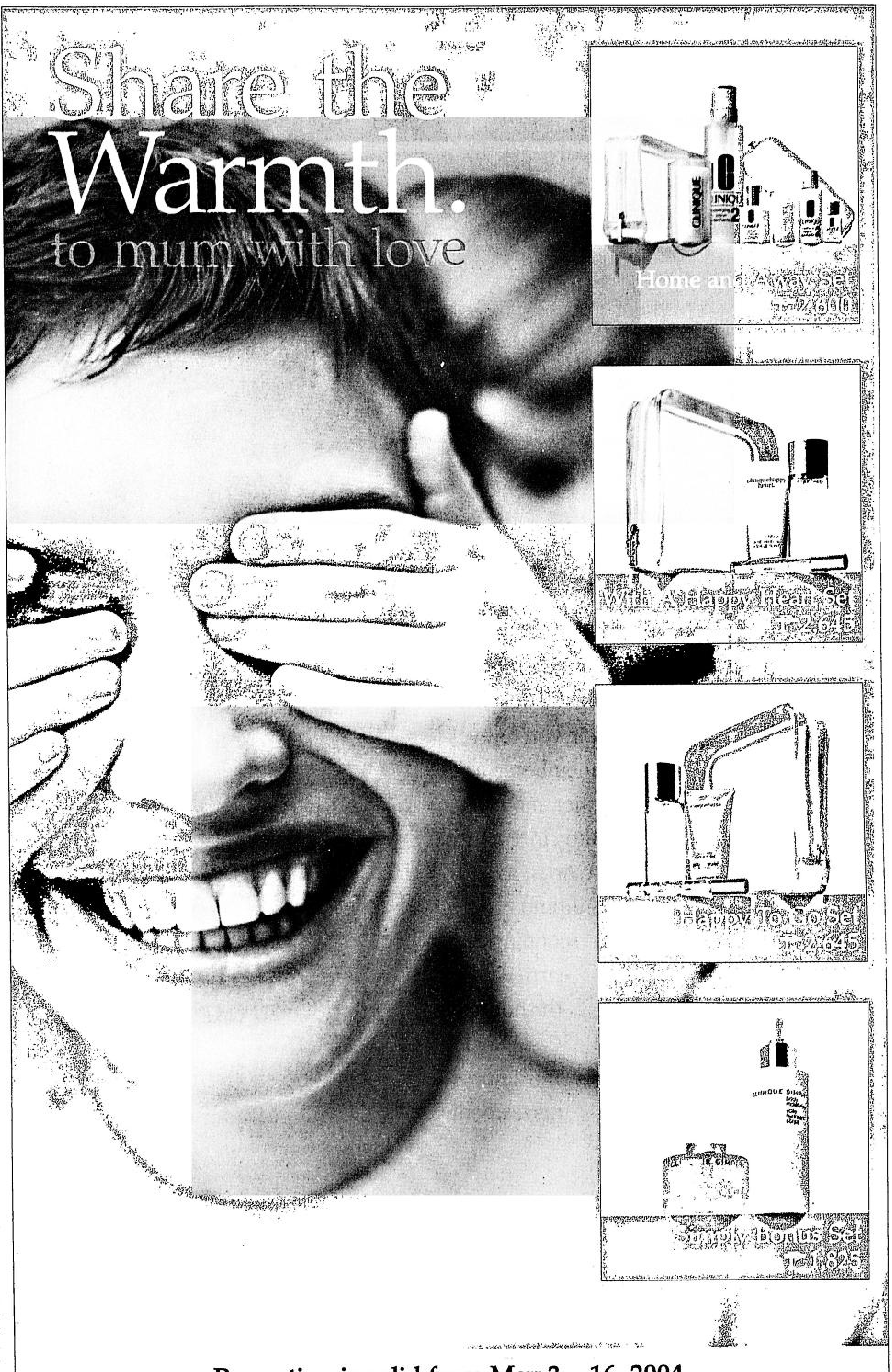
Jose, not a Hispanophile himself, rose to his defense. "You punks," he cried, "how dare you criticize our greatest writer in English! If you could but write a tenth of what he has written, then perhaps you might earn the right to criticize him!"

It is doubtful if the overly critical young can write a tenth of his prolific writing, much less match a tenth of the brilliance of its insight and the majesty of its prose style. They cannot match it because they have been far removed from the sources of Nick's true strength as a writer: a deep sense of history and an indomitable spirit to recover the past and relate it to the present and the future. In short, he was a writer with no shortness of memory.

Those sources, no matter their increasing scarcity, are available to the young. But ignorance of the Spanish language in which much of the historical and cultural documents that have a bearing on the formation of Filipino identity across the centuries has abetted the gross reductionism and shortsightedness that constitute much of the Filipino's historical memory, particularly of the young.

And it is the most distinct mark of Nick's

NICK/D2



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Nick Joaquin's apocalypse: the last days of a giant

From page D1

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Purposeful journalism

If Nick had ignited a revolution, it was a revolution against the lotus eaters. He wrenched himself away from their womb and sucked milk from the breasts of España and Filipinas that had been banished from the dominion of Hollywood and pop culture. Not that he himself had not been swayed and riveted by modern culture: It could be said that he embraced it much like a boy eager for new toys and new planets.

His journalism in fact was notable for its zeitgeist, for detecting the feel of the moment, the current of the times. Back when it was "*bakya*" to write about Nora Aunor, he wrote about the darling of the masses in a vein that was popular but never crass, intelligent but never pompous. He endowed his journalism with a sense of wonder, discovery and purpose. His journalism was an exemplar of his exhortation to writers, especially to creative writers who looked down on the ephemera of journalism: to write about any subject, even about the most seemingly insignificant thing, "as if it were the parting of the Red Sea and the splitting of the atom."

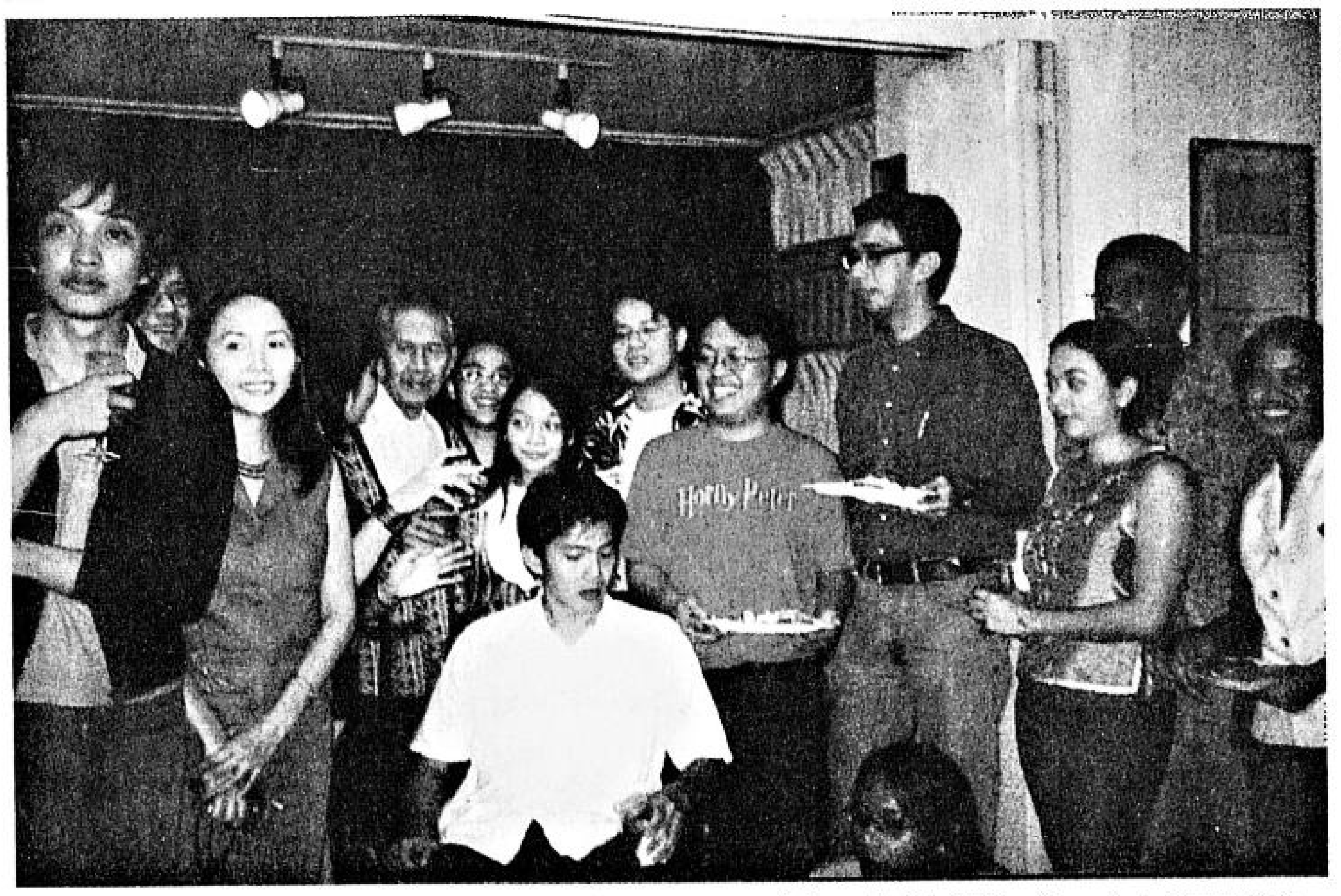
But while Nick embraced and basked in modern culture, he never allowed himself to be debased by it. He did not embrace the fashions of the day after thumbing down the achievements of the past. The past provided him with the perspective with which to situate and critically discern the present.

He had a healthy regard for the past that was unfaltering and consistent. He first achieved national renown when he won the essay-writing contest on the feast of Our Lady of La Naval sponsored by the Dominicans (UST would later award him, who finished only high school, with the only solid badge of formal education he had: an Associate in Arts certificate).

The essay was the first of his many eloquent statements on the lotus eaters masquerading as historians, nationalists and modernists who never as much read the original documents and traces of the past but were cavalier in dismissing it.

He wrote: "The past can become usable if we be willing to enter into its spirit and to carry there a reasonably hospitable mind."

The past definitely provided him with the myths and motifs that constitute the best of his fiction and non-fiction. Since these myths and motifs were part of the popular culture of old, Nick could be seen as the perennial popular writer. The study of the scholar Florentino Hornedo on the primary sources of Nick's fiction is an eye-opener. It showed that Nick raided the devotionals and popular miracle stories of the Spanish era and recast them in a vein that was ironic and rich with critical meanings that provided them a contemporary flavor and should explain the readers' fascination with them.



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Historical amnesia

But lacking historical mooring, the younger generations are blinded by the novel rather than the new. And without the mooring and a modicum of effort to confront the Spanish past and take it on its own terms with objectivity and a little faith, they cannot possibly have a true appreciation of the past as it relates to the present.

This inability to confront the past realistically is shown, for example, when some young writers took offense at Hornédo's study for allegedly exposing Nick as a plagiarist. On the contrary, the study showed Nick's healthy regard for the past and his refusal to freeze it like an archeological relic.

For Nick's Hispanism, he was called a hopeless romantic and even anti-Filipino. But he never exalted Spanish heritage just for any Proustian sense of nostalgia. He knew the value of the heritage because to discard it would be like discarding one's soul. He was a nationalist because he was a realist:

"To accuse the Spanish, over and over again, of having brought us all sorts of things, mostly evil, among which we can usually remember nothing valuable —except perhaps religion and national unity—is equivalent to saying of a not very model mother that she has given her child nothing, except life. For in the profoundest possible sense, Spain did give birth to us—as a nation, as a historical people. This geographical unit of numberless islands—this mystical unit of numberless tongues, bloods and cultures called Filipino—was begotten of Spain, was a Spanish creation."

Infused with a keen sense of the past and a reverent regard for heritage, Nick was a critical discerner of the present. Like Solomon in his celebrated poem, he railed against the debasement of the times ("the apes defile the ivory temple, the peacocks chant dark blasphemies"), and in his quest for the innocence of the past, tried to restore the primordial heritage that would make all things new and fresh ("Let me arise and follow the river back to its source. I would bathe my bones among the chaste rivulets that quiver out of the clean primeval stones.")

Biblical proportions

The biblical allusions should impress upon us the biblical proportions of Nick's character. He helped form and headed the union of workers of the pre-martial law Philippines Free Press. He criticized Ferdinand Marcos fiercely and if he agreed to the offer of the dictator to award him the National Artist laureate, a form of co-optation, it was to wangle the release of a writer in political detention.

It was because he knew of the murderous lengths the dictatorship could go to silence its critics that he cautioned F. Sionil Jose against the latter's characteristic vehement speech against martial law. He was fiercely loyal to his friends even if some of them were not loyal to him and even exploited him.

In the last years of his life, he refused ever to speak to a writer, a bosom friend of old, after she fooled him into signing a petition supporting a partisan in a factional struggle at the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

But he fought his battles with good humor and an unerring sense of gentlemanliness. He knew that he had created some enemies because of his unionism and his fight against martial law, particularly against writers who became the propagandists of authoritarianism, but he treated them with humor and humanity.

In a taped series of conversations with Jose, he expressed the wish to be cremated and his ashes spread over the heads of his enemies, like the sign of Ash Wednesday marked on the forehead of the devil.

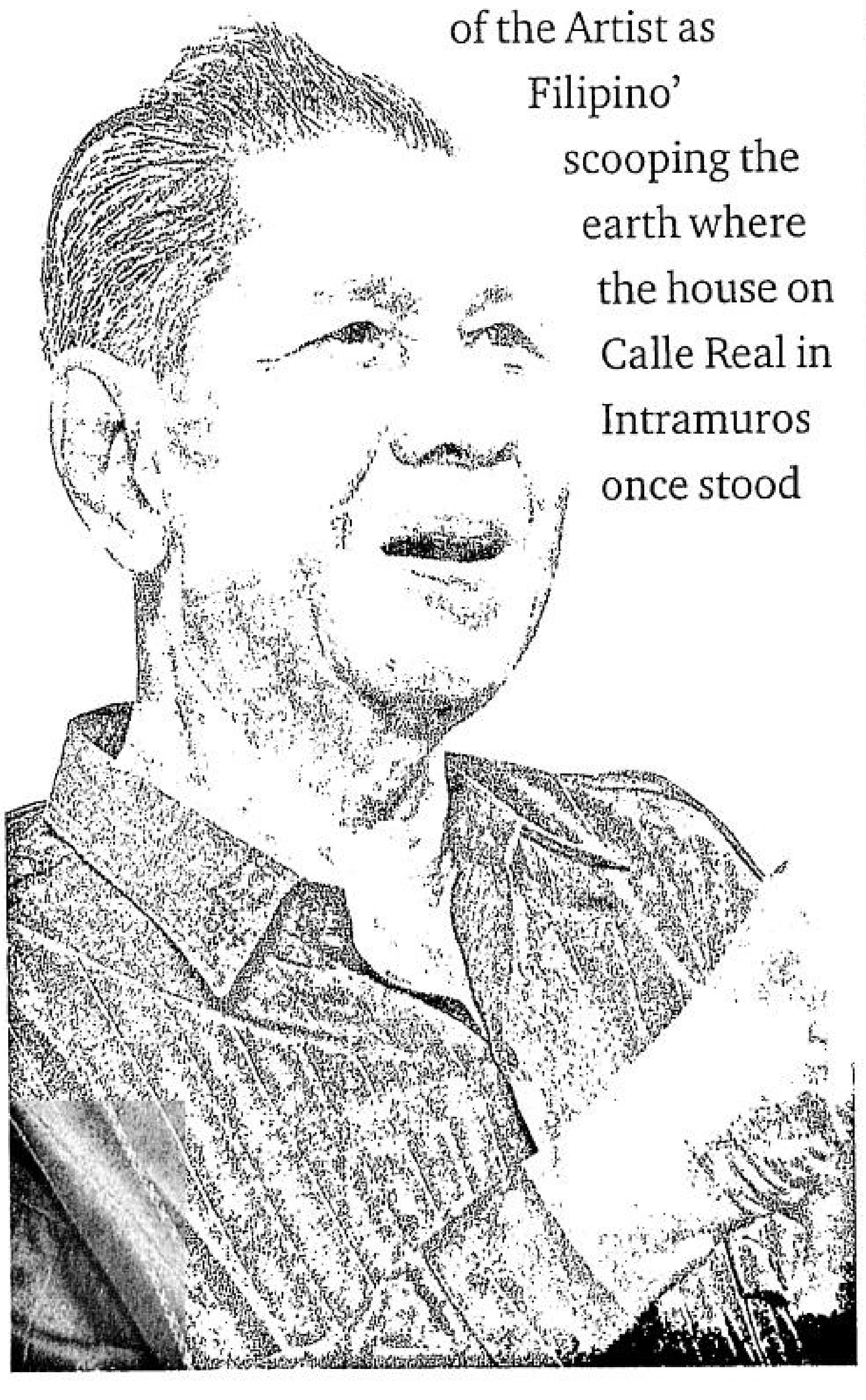
His humor was devastating but jolly. When he saw a graduate production of "Portrait of the Artist as Filipino," he bellowed, "The high school production was better!"

He worshipped Dostoyevsky and harassed every young writer to read the Russian novelist, but he himself admitted that "not to read 'Crime and Punishment' is a crime, but to read it is a punishment."

His humor showed his lust for life. His beer adventures were many and ceaseless. His faithful beer companion was Elena Roco, a retired Mathematics teacher of UST who could outguzzle him and argue with him in Spanish, complete with cracking expletives.

She often played accountant to him, the one who kept tab of his generous tipping. Elena is perhaps the most intriguing woman in Philippine letters. Since Nick never married, many thought of her as his lover, his beautiful Dulcinea. Actually, she was Sancho Panza to his Don Quixote.

Now numbered among the dust, Nick Joaquin will forever be remembered as a cherisher and evoker, like Bitoy in 'Portrait of the Artist as Filipino' scooping the earth where the house on Calle Real in Intramuros once stood



Intimations of mortality

In his final years, his zest for life was balanced by an increasing knowledge of his mortality. When National Artist Francisco Arcellana died two years ago, Nick attended the state necrological service at the Cultural Center of the Philippines and, with loud gusto, sang along with the choir the musical sendoff, Edward Grieg's "I Love Thee."

Even after the song, Nick continued to sing, oblivious that his hearty singing was causing embarrassment among the guests. When the bier of Arcellana was brought down for its final journey, Nick bellowed, "Goodbye, Franz! See you soon!"

With Nick's wonderful writings and beautiful person, it is no wonder many met the news of his death with some denial and extreme sadness. "I thought he was indestructible," said Asian American studies scholar Oscar Campomanes.

In Baguio City, at the UST national writers' workshop, Tessie Jose tearfully told her husband the news. Frankie Jose was stunned, and asked to sit down to steady himself. He suddenly started to heave, and Tessie thought he would collapse. *"Ano ka ba? Ilabas mo 'yan. Huwag mong kimkimin,"* she pleaded. He obliged and broke down. "What a loss!" he cried. "He was a true friend, a decent man."

"A giant has passed," said Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo. The Dominican scholar Fr. Rolando V. de la Rosa promised to say a Mass for Nick in his convent in Calamba, but said, "Honestly though, I think he is already in heaven: He needs to give God the true portrait of the Filipino as artist."

St. Nick in heaven? What an apt portrait of his militant artistry and cultural mission to limn and mold the true portrait of the Filipino soul.

Now numbered among the dust, Nick Joaquin will forever be remembered as a cherisher and evoker, like Bitoy in "Portrait" scooping the earth where the house on Calle Real in Intramuros once stood, now leveled to the ground by the bombs of the World War II and profaned by the banality of the postwar era and the forgetfulness of the Filipino:

"By the dust, and by the dust of all the generations, I promise to continue, I promise to preserve!"

With the choirs of heaven, Nick continues to sing and exalt: "To remember and to sing: that is my vocation!"

LION IN WINTER. Signing one of his books for a fan

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Nick Joaquin's apocalypse: the last days of a giant

From page D1

legacy that his writings have served as a bridge to the untranslatable and indecipherable past for the generations that are distinguished by a near complete lack of historical memory, generations that have been reared in the womb of the Lotus Eaters, a people feeding on a steady diet of oblivion and forgetfulness.

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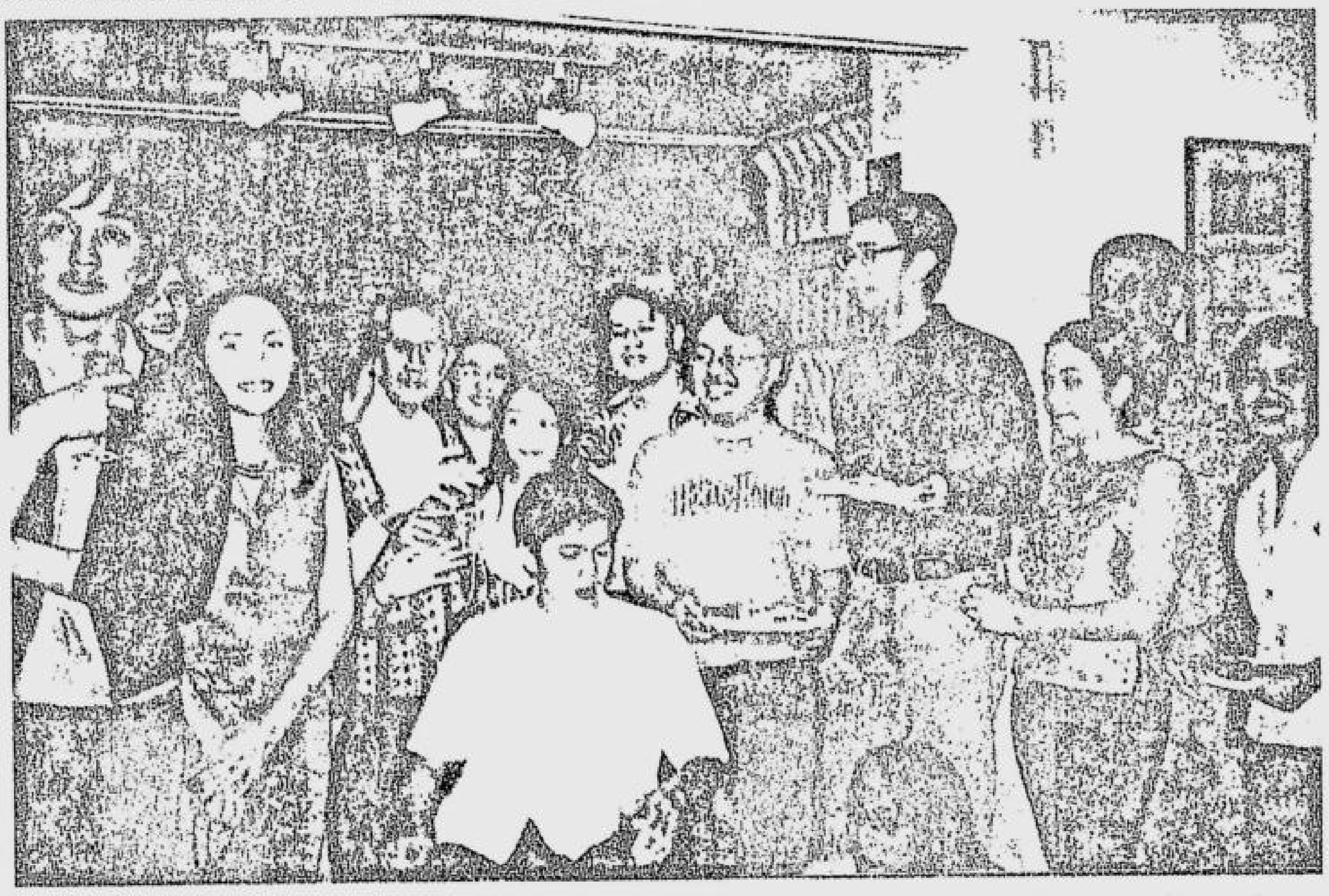

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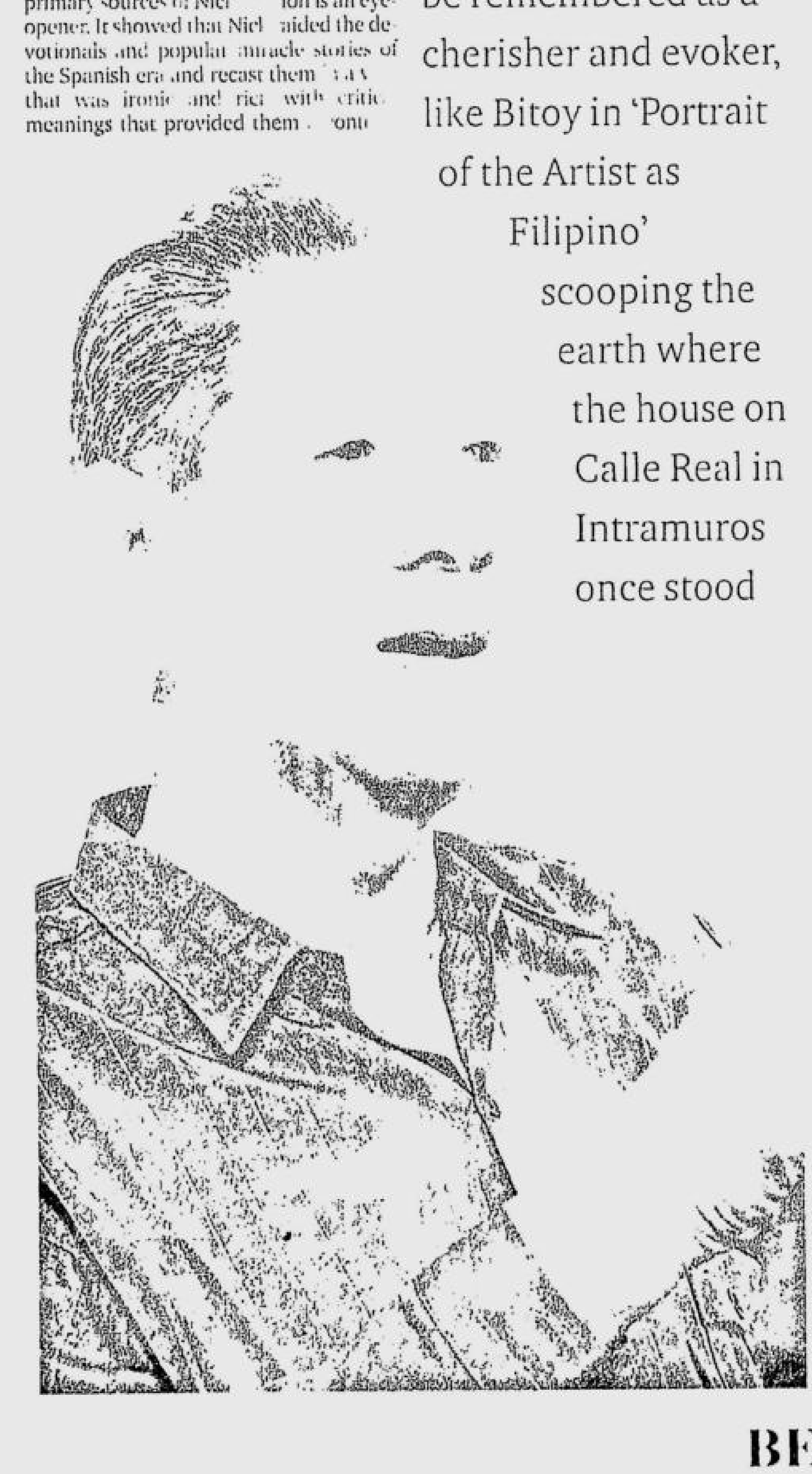

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In a taped series of conversations with Jose, he expressed the wish to be cremated and his ashes spread over the heads of his enemies, like the sign of Ash Wednesday marked on the forehead of the devil.

His humor was devastating but jolly. When he saw a graduate production of "Portrait of the Artist as Filipino," he bellowed, "The high school production was better!"

He worshipped Dostoyevsky and harassed every young writer to read the Russian novelist, but he himself admitted that "not to read 'Crime and Punishment' is a crime, but to read it is a punishment."

His humor showed his lust for life. His beer adventures were many and ceaseless. His faithful beer companion was Elena Roco, a retired Mathematics teacher of UST who could outguzzle him and argue with him in Spanish, complete with cracking expletives.

She often played accountant to him, the one who kept tab of his generous tipping. Elena is perhaps the most intriguing woman in Philippine letters. Since Nick never married, many thought of her as his lover, his beautiful Dulcinea. Actually, she was Sancho Panza to his Don Quixote.

Intimations of mortality

In his final years, his zest for life was balanced by an increasing knowledge of his mortality. When National Artist Francisco Arcellana died two years ago, Nick attended the state necrological service at the Cultural Center of the Philippines and, with loud gusto, sang along with the choir the musical sendoff, Edward Grieg's "I Love Thee."

Even after the song, Nick continued to sing, oblivious that his hearty singing was causing embarrassment among the guests. When the bier of Arcellana was brought down for its final journey, Nick bellowed, "Goodbye, Franz! See you soon!"

With Nick's wonderful writings and beautiful person, it is no wonder many met the news of his death with some denial and extreme sadness. "I thought he was indestructible," said Asian American studies scholar Oscar Campomanes.

In Baguio City, at the UST national writers' workshop, Tessie Jose tearfully told her husband the news. Frankie Jose was stunned, and asked to sit down to steady himself. He suddenly started to heave, and Tessie thought he would collapse. *"Ano ka ba? Ilabas mo 'yan. Huwag mong kimkimin,"* she pleaded. He obliged and broke down. "What a loss!" he cried. "He was a true friend, a decent man."

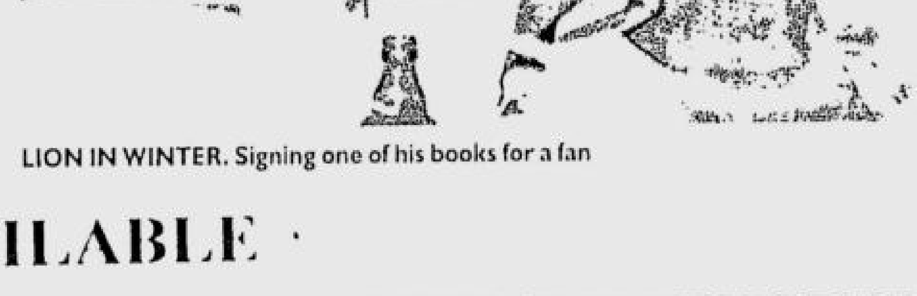
"A giant has passed," said Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo. The Dominican scholar F Rolando V. de la Rosa promised to say Mass for Nick in his convent in Calamba but said, "Honestly though, I think he already in heaven: He needs to give Go the true portrait of the Filipino as artist."

St. Nick in heaven? What an apt portrait of his militant artistry and cultural mission to limn and mold the true portrait of the Filipino soul.

Now numbered among the dust, Nick Joaquin will forever be remembered as a cherisher and evoker, like Bitoy in "Portrait" scooping the earth where the house on Calle Real in Intramuros once stood, now leveled to the ground by the bombs of the World War II and profaned by the banality of the postwar era [illegible] the forgetfulness of the Filipino.

"By the dust, and by the dust of all the generations, I promise to continue, I promise to preserve!"

With the choirs of heaven, Nick continues to sing and exalt: "To remember and to sing: that is my vocation!"



LION IN WINTER. Signing one of his books for a fan

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

AT THE Museo Pambata marketplace

Saturday in the museum

LEARNING about the digestive system

From page D4

Paloma (my daughter) and I could not decide which soaps to get: spearmint, sandalwood, cinnamon, lavender. There were oils, bath gels, face scrubs and many more incredible products to choose from.

Violaine and her husband Joel have been keeping bees for 20 years. They now run 800 honey bee colonies and produce "ripe, unfiltered honey, natural bee pollen pellets and fresh royal jelly." All these are supposed to possess nutritive and medicinal properties!

Well, if Joel and Violaine are prime examples of what all these bee products do for you, I'm convinced. It truly is worth the trip to experience seeing these Italian honey bees colonies and how honey is extracted to make wonderful products. Field trips are encouraged and a bee museum is soon to go up.

Well, all the options I just wrote about tell us that we do have fun, interesting and educational alternatives for weekends with our kids!

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CCP May-June activities

"KANTAPELLA." May 25-26, 8 p.m. An evening of pop, rock, jazz and other favorites sung a capella by The CompanY, The Tux, The Opera.

THE CCP Sine Taktakan. A year-round talkfest on Philippine media, arts and culture tackles on June 16 "Why Hollywood and the rest of the West are looking Eastwards for the best in world cinema."

Sine Asya 2004

Features the best of contemporary and classic Asian Cinema. Sine Asya marathons are during the second and fourth Sundays of every month.

THE ASIAN Sports Flick. May 27

EARLY works of Pinoy National Artists for Cinema. June 10

ASIAN Alternative Love Styles. June 24

Summer arts workshops and lecture series

NATIONAL Folk Dance Workshop for Teachers. May 23-28, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Tanghalang Francisco Balagtas.

"FREEFEST 5: The 5th CCP Filipino Full-length Indie Feature Festival and Workshop." A three-phase workshop and festival that runs until November at Museo ng Kalinangan.

MEDIA Awareness Workshop answers this May "Why are Filipinos 'ocho-ocho-ing,' 'telenovela-ing' and 'game time show-ing.'"

Exhibits

"SANTI." A retrospective exhibit featuring Santiago Bose's works and curated by Bobi Valenzuela runs until May 16 at Bulwagang Juan Luna Main Gallery.

"SAM Penaso." Self-titled solo show by young artist Sam Penaso

"CAMILLE de la Rosa Solo Exhibition." Paintings of Ibarra de la Rosa's daughter will be showcased until May 30 at Pasilyo Guillermo Tolentino

"IVATANS." Michael Blanco's works may be seen until May 30 at Pasilyo Vicente Manansala (2/L Hallway)

"PERCEIVING the CCP." An exhibition featuring CCP's self-examination and evaluation as seen from research results of 100 respondents. It will run for three cycles until November.

"PALAMUTI" showcases indigenous jewelry from CCP's collection and contemporary fashion accessories made of local materials.

"THE CCP Collection of Asian Traditional Musical Instruments" features Indonesian *gamelan*, Indian sitar, Japanese *koto*, Philippine *kulintangan*, Chinese *gu zheng* and Thai *pi-phat* ensemble.

Outreach performances

"ANATOMIYA ng Korupsyon sa Rehiyon." A comedy on a smorgasbord of issues in a government agency written by Malou Jacob. May 5-6, Davao City

"MAGSIMULA Ka." This Gines Tan award-winning musical presents a graduating class that believes in dreams amid stingy realities. Until June

"MAGNIFICAT." The collaboration of writer Nestor Torre and composer Ryan Cayabyab is a celebration of the Blessed Virgin's song of praise. It will tour Metro Manila schools until June.

Congratulations!

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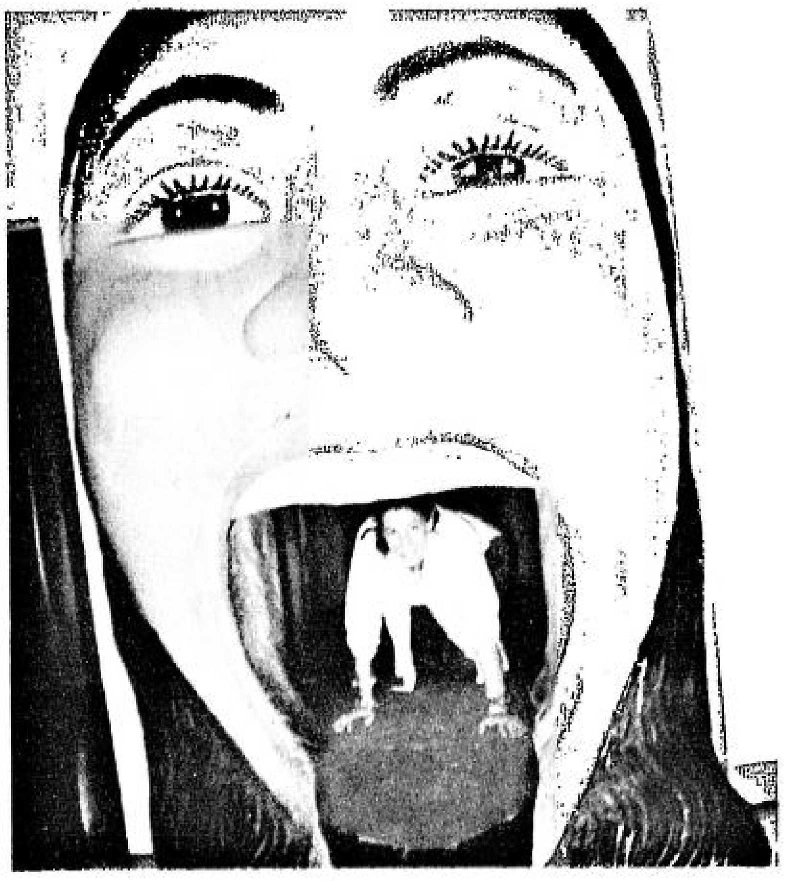
Best in Swimwear
Miss Friendship

Ms. Eizza Rancesca Lim
Miss Silka 2004
Best in Gown

Ms. Mary France Ocampo
2nd Runner-up
Miss Photogenic

The Winner had a date with Silka endorser John Lloyd Cruz.



I ALSO had fun interacting and discovering the Tongue!

We do have fun, interesting and educational alternatives for grand weekends with our kids

ISABEL and my kids checking out Samar *banigs* in the market

Saturday in the museum

ALL4ART

Bea Zobel Jr.

I BRAVELY said I would look after my nephews, nieces and my kids all weekend. Now the question: What to do?

Given my interest in providing innovative experiences for my family, I wasn't going to enter a mall all weekend. It would be simple enough, tempting... but no. I had to make more of an effort and look for something truly enriching.

It was an early morning start on Saturday to Market-Market at the Fort. The weekend before, Pinky Camara Roxas had taken me to this market and to Aani Market in Taguig. We bought all kinds of delicious things and had them for breakfast at her house.

What a delicious way to begin the day smelling those wonderful organic vegetables and fruits. You can also have *puto bungbong, kutsinta, suman* or *bibingka* freshly prepared for you right there.

Then, of course, there are the handicrafts. I had to see what was new. I was wonderfully surprised to see a novel type of *banig*. I had never seen it before. I loved it. The owner of the stall, Isabel Villa Abrille, was quick to explain that these were mats made in Basey, Samar.

The majority of the people in about 50 villages were engaged in their production with the women weaving and the men gathering the materials. I was crazy about the designs and the colors.

There are all types to suit your taste, whether plain, checkered or embroidered. This craft has been passed down through the generations.

Interactive displays

Next stop: Museo Pambata. The children were ecstatic. The ride to Roxas Boulevard was a bit uncomfortable due to heavy traffic, but the children remained in good spirits.

Once at Museo, we started counting heads to pay the entrance fee but were told that at 12:30 p.m. they were closing for lunch. I could not believe what I had just heard. "You've made a mistake," I said rudely. "No, Ma'am, we close for lunch. You can wait outside and comeback at 1:30 p.m."

I was flabbergasted. You cannot close a museum for lunch! I spent many hours as trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Manila trying to convince people to visit. What would museum-goers say if the exhibits closed for lunch? I would recommend lunch shifts, please!

Once inside the Museo, I could not begin to explain the excitement. "Tita Bea, let's start here." "Mummy, let me take you to the science room." I was getting dizzy with all the activity.

The Museo is indeed one of the best interactive museums in the Philippines. Hey, when was the last time you overheard "please touch everything!" Yup, you read right. Your child can touch everything and won't be scolded.

This incredible museum encourages children to explore, discover and learn. Topics include the rainforest, old Manila (where kids put on costumes and ride on the *tranvia*), science, career options (what do you see yourself doing in years to come), crafts room, market place or going through your body.

Yes, I found myself engulfed in a big mouth and learning about my tongue! I was beginning to get all confused with the array of choices. Thankfully, wonderful Maricel Montero came to my aid.

Museo Pambata also holds fascinating workshops with storytellers and musical theater. The list goes on.

My group could not get enough. It has been a long time since I had so much fun in a museum. It had also been educational. The children were tired and ready to go home. I was so proud to see such a world-class museum on our turf.

Honey trip

The next day I had to go find Ilog-Maria—a honeybee farm. I needed to buy products for a project of mine. I decided that a trip to the highlands would be my treat of the day for the kids. Off we went to find biodegradable products produced mainly with honey.

Upon arrival, we ran into Betty Samson who was doing a story for "Moms and Kids," a great magazine about childcare, parenting and fun activities.

SATURDAY/ D3

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LIFESTYLE

Reclaiming an immigrant past

"Japanese Pioneers in the Northern Philippine Highlands: A Centennial Tribute, 1903-2003"
Edited by Patricia Okubo Afable
Baguio City: Filipino-Japanese Foundation of Northern Luzon, Inc., 2004

By Bernardita Reyes Churchill
Contributor

JAPANESE PIONEERS

REVIEW

THE STORY of Japanese pioneers in the Cordillera highlands and their contributions to the development of the region and the country in the decades before World War II needs telling, because it is a story whose legacy has touched many Filipino lives.

What we have in "Japanese Pioneers in the Northern Philippine Highlands," edited by Patricia Okubo Afable, is a well-documented work drawing from archival and documentary sources in the Philippines and the United States, with photographs and illustrations also from the Philippines and Japan that by themselves make a good pictorial essay.

It's a work where oral history plays a major role in bringing together the story of these Japanese pioneers—recollections told "with pride and great longing" by their descendants, of the lives and work of their parents and grandparents.

Road workers

The story began a hundred years ago, with 150 or so Japanese men and a few women, mainly from southern Japan, who arrived between 1903 to 1905 in the final phase of the construction of the Benguet Road. [Japanese labor would also participate in the building of the Naguilian and Kennon Roads].

There were many reasons why they left their homeland. Some did so to see the world, others to find a better life amid hopeless poverty at home, still others to avoid military draft.

The Kennon road project was intended to connect the end of the Manila-Dagupan railway to Baguio and to open up Benguet province and the rest of the northern Luzon Cordillera to settlement and mining exploration.

Over 4,000 men from 46 nationalities, most of them Filipinos, worked on this road. The group from southern Japan who stayed on formed the core of the early Japanese community in these highlands. They were the earliest of the pioneers, known in Ilocano as *dagidyay imun-una.*

These pioneers experienced the strenuous work and extremely hazardous conditions of the road construction, carving the zigzag road from the mountainsides. They were not just road workers, but were also carpenters, masons and traders.

There in the highlands, the local Ibaloy-speaking peoples, as well as others from surrounding regions, speaking lowland languages as well as Kankanay, Kalanguya, Ifugao and Bontoc, also found their way to work in the construction.

What grew was a highly multicultural community who met in the marketplace, building trades, farms and gold mines, sharing local traditional feasts, dealing with the American government and working and living in the Episcopal and Catholic missions.

Prosperous communities

From the backbreaking construction work on the Kennon Road, the Japanese workers

RECLAIMING/ E2

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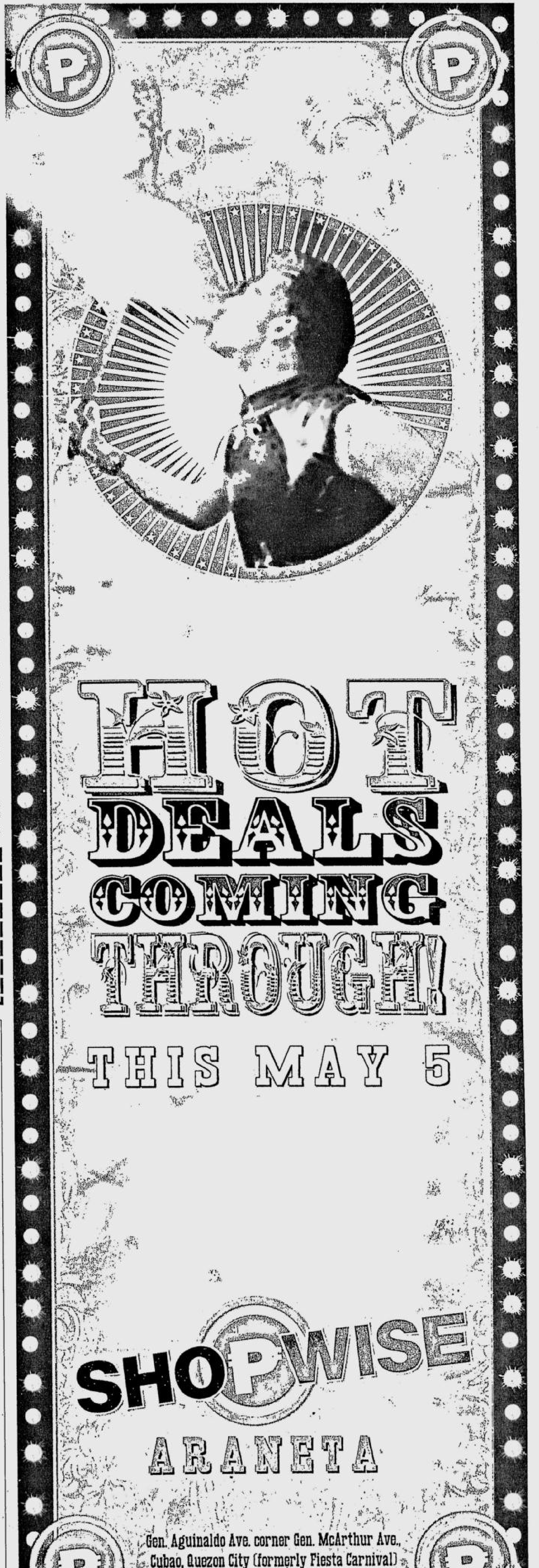


Gen. Aguinaldo Ave. corner Gen. McArthur Ave.,
Cubao, Quezon City (formerly Fiesta Carnival)

Reclaiming an immigrant past

From page E1

eventually established small but prosperous communities engaged in construction and retail businesses and agriculture. They were among Baguio's earliest builders, vegetable farmers, sawmill workers, transport contractors and merchants.

By the 1910s, Session Road, Baguio's main street, had already become a major Japanese business area. With the improvement of transportation in the next decade, Baguio became the prime tourist destination in Southeast Asia, thus experiencing a building boom.

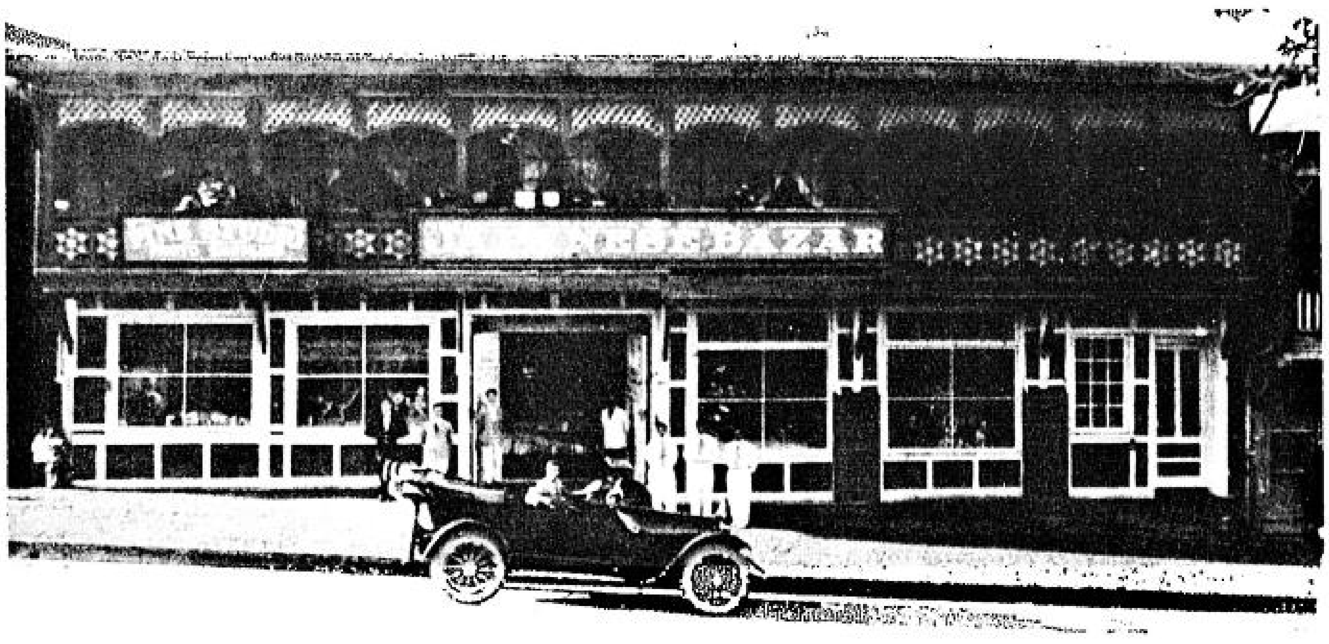
Japanese carpenters wound up with their own contracting businesses, building more houses, corporate vacation homes, religious institutions and public buildings, a few of which can still be seen today.

Initially participating only in the building and retail trades—as successful grocery and general store owners—many Japanese also eventually supplemented their incomes through vegetable gardening. In the late 1910s, "Baguio" vegetables started being transported to Manila.

By 1930, there were over 300 Japanese engaged in the building trades, farming and retail business in the area. The Baguio Japanese Association had been formed in 1920, and within five years a Japanese school had been founded.

The expansion of the Baguio gold mines that began in the late 1920s ushered in the final decade of Japanese settlement in the Baguio-Benguet area. A new wave of Japanese sojourner carpenters and businessmen arrived to fill many jobs in sawmills, building construction and mining plants, as well as in retail stores.

In 1939, the Baguio-Benguet region, including La Trinidad, Itogon and Tuba, had a combined Japanese population of 1064. There were 150 children enrolled in the Japanese school. There were 1260 other foreigners, and Baguio had 24,117 people. The Japanese population was not very large in relation to the total number of people in Baguio, but the presence of Japanese businesses and Japanese-Filipino descendants was much evident.



THE JAPANESE Bazar on Session Road, Baguio City, in late 1910, owned by Hideo Hayakawa

Major disruption

Then the war came on Dec. 8, 1941, and the resulting Japanese occupation of the country (which lasted till 1945) disrupted the "peacetime" lives of the Japanese-Filipino communities in Baguio and elsewhere in the Cordillera.

The American military immediately ordered the detention of all Japanese, although many who had married Filipinas were given protection by kinsmen and neighbors, and thus escaped detention. With the arrival of the Japanese forces in Baguio on Dec. 27, 1942, all Japanese under detention were released.

Most of the Japanese businessmen, farmers and merchants continued to live and work at home during *timpon Hapon* ("the Japanese time"). Baguio-Benguet Japanese were the first to be employed by the occupation government or tapped for duty by the Japanese military, some to work with the dreaded Kempeitei.

It is interesting to note here that the insider roles of many of these Japanese residents, serving as interpreters and guides, gave them the opportunity to provide crucial information to the Filipino community in the final year of the war. Equally interesting is the fact that some sons, young men with Japanese surnames, enlisted in the Usaffe in 1941 and fought in Bataan. A larger number joined anti-Japanese guerrilla units in northern Luzon, especially in 1944.

Upon the liberation of Baguio in April 1945, these same people would become prisoners of war under the Allied forces, along with those who survived the extremely hazardous trek to the north where the Japanese troops retreated (two-thirds of their number died of illness and starvation). Later, they would be charged with collaborating with the enemy.

In late 1945, all Japanese men and women, some Filipino wives, and adult children who remained in Baguio and in the mountain provinces either surrendered to or were rounded up by the US military, labeled "enemy aliens," and sent to detention camps.

In late 1945, all full-blooded Japanese men and women who survived the war were repatriated to Japan, with very few exceptions. Many Filipino-born wives of Japanese and their adult children were also tried for collaboration with Japan.

It was not until 1948 when they were officially cleared of these charges. The trauma of war and its aftermath would explain why for several decades these women and children, resigned to their tragic family breakups, would not openly speak of their Japanese identities.

Proud descendants

Today, these descendants of the Japanese pioneers represent many occupations and professional fields. Over 500 second-generation descendants are now living in the northern Philippines, over 100 of whom were interviewed for this book. At this time, they no longer feel the need to deny or diminish the legacy of their Japanese ancestry.

The book is, indeed, very much the story of these Japanese pioneers—fathers to their children born from marriage with local "Igorot" women. These women were strong women who chose marriage with the Diyapan or Kapunis (a few were married twice to Japanese men after having been widowed), probably a bold move to have taken at that time.

One wishes that they were also featured in bolder strokes in the book. Their role in keeping their family together in the face of the tremendous disruptions of war were no doubt crucial in their offsprings' appreciation of their mixed Filipino-Japanese roots.

"Japanese Pioneers in the Northern Philippine Highlands" will be launched May 4, 3 p.m. at UP Baguio. Call (74) 4424708 or 4438493.

FIRST-time author Corazon del Mundo

Book on self-empowerment

JUST as there are feel-good movies, there are also feel-good books. Filipina author Corazon del Mundo wrote one of such feel-good, self-help book to aid anyone who wishes to fathom life's ironies and in congruencies.

"Being Extraordinary! Living Your Highest Potential" is an invitation to look into one's inner self. The book is a journey through an individual's past, present and future in a highly readable, easy-to-finish pocketbook format.

A mother of three children, del Mundo migrated to the US in 1979. She was a prominent designer abroad for two decades before she retired to write her first book. She returned home because she wanted her book published here.

Divided into 28 chapters, "Being Extraordinary: Living Your Highest Potential" imprints in the hearts of readers how one woman, mother and wife discovered universal truths on God, love, destiny, faith, reality, life and trials (including the death of a loved one).

Like the phenomenal Rick Warren international bestseller "The Purpose-Driven Life," Del Mundo's volume is full of quotes and insights applicable to everyday living.

She says it is only through a "sudden shift of consciousness" or the willingness to accept one's self unconditionally that a person will "understand and recognize his true self and its divine beauty... And that in life, we are writers of the script of our own life story."

The book is available at National Bookstore and Powerbooks outlets. Call 0918-3917909.

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First local book magazine launched

POWERBOOKS, the premier specialty bookstore in the Philippines, recently launched Read Magazine, the first local magazine on books made for and by book lovers.

The full-color glossy will be distributed quarterly and be given for free for a minimum one-day purchase (single or accumulated) worth P1,000 at any Powerbooks branch. It can also be purchased separately.

Read Magazine aims to encourage habitual reading by introducing the best and latest books. The first issue features books now debuting worldwide: John Grisham's "The Last Juror," James Patterson's "3rd Degree" and rookie novelist Cecelia Ahern's "PS, I Love You."

The regular sections are: Power Picks with selections from various genres; Retro, which encourages readers to revisit contemporary classics; Lokal, a showcase of Philippine literature; On Reading, which discusses the joys of reading; From the Secret Files of Captain Psycho, a column; and a section where literary pieces are published for the first time. Other sections readers will enjoy include the Quiz and Trivia pages.

Read Magazine is now available exclusively at Powerbooks' four branches in Greenbelt 4 and Glorietta 3 in Ayala Center Makati, SM Megamall and Corte delas Palmas, Alabang Town Center.

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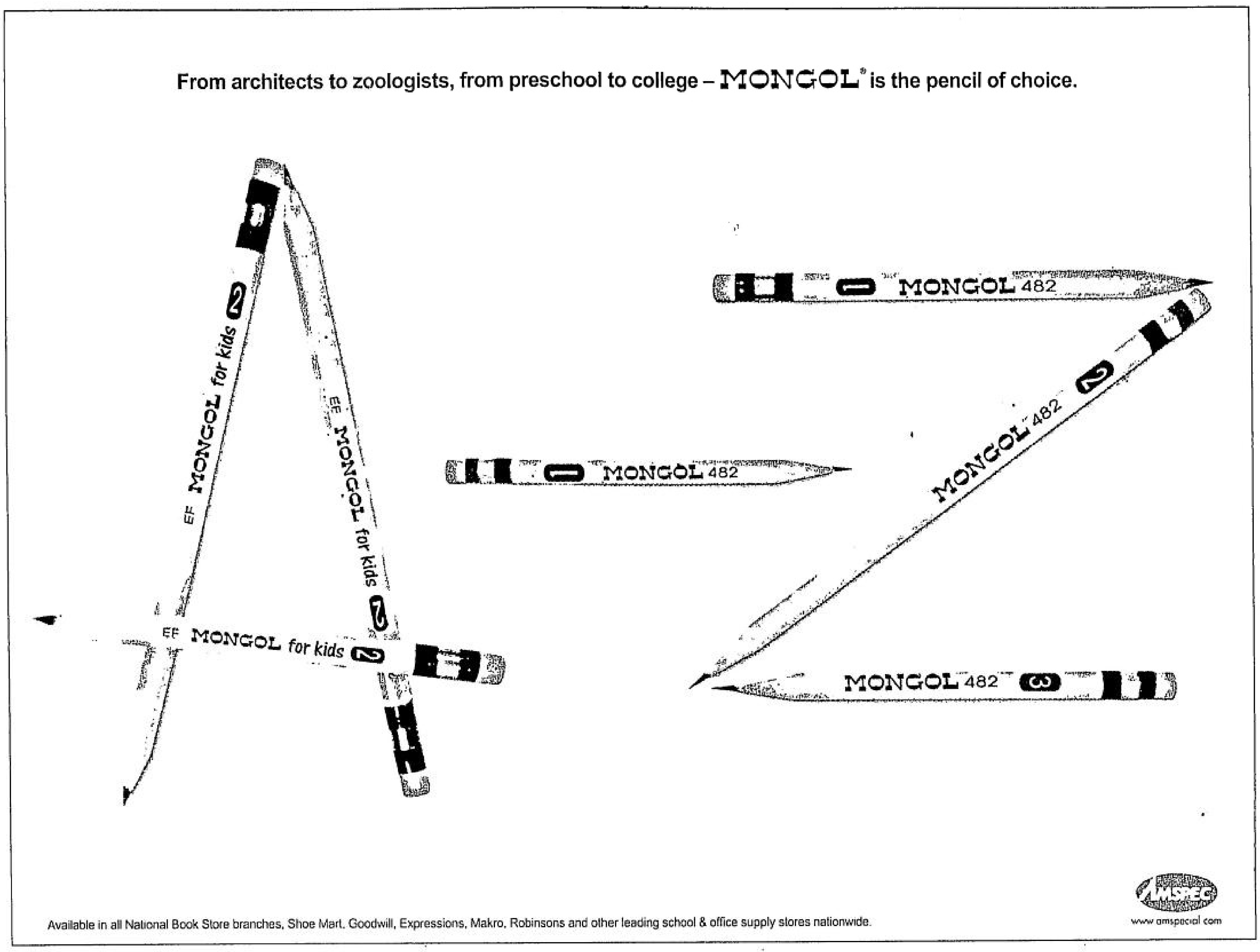
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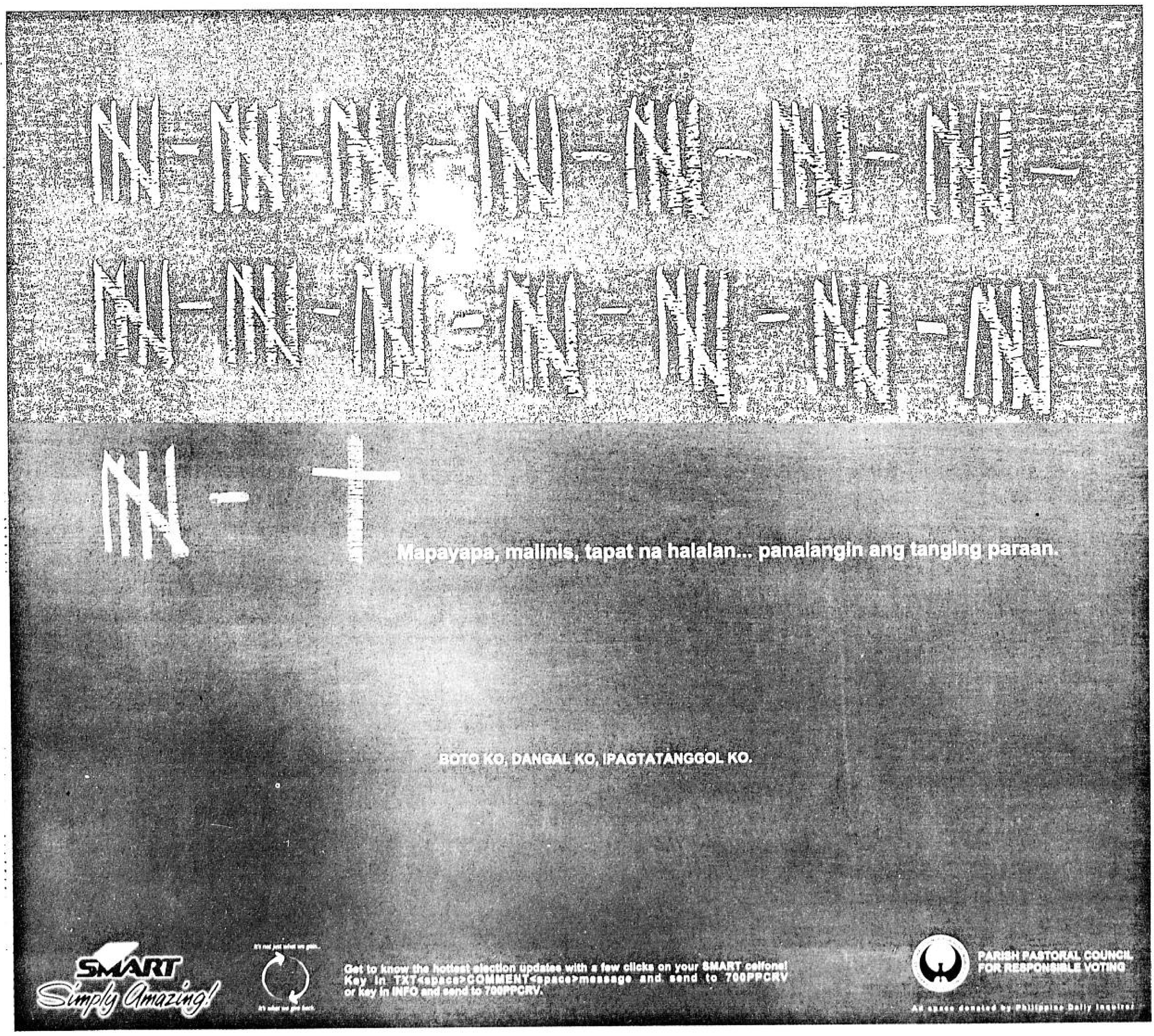
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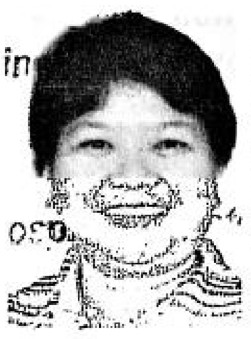
Born to teach

Dr. Amor de Torres, dean of the College of Education of Xavier University, considers teaching a vocation, not just a profession

By Butch Hernandez
Contributor



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Dr. De Torres says it is a big challenge to address the needs of the under-served. In particular, she cites the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao. She adds that at Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro City, they have started an Accelerated Teacher Education for the Lumad program. Their aim is to professionalize para-teachers to empower them and the communities they serve.

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The author is the executive director of Foundation for Worldwide People Power

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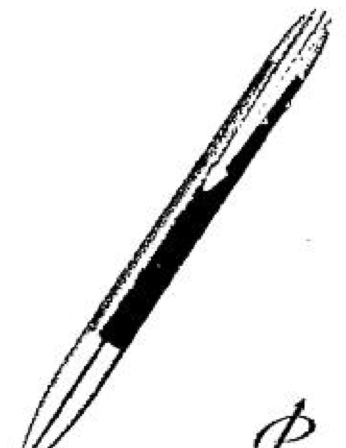

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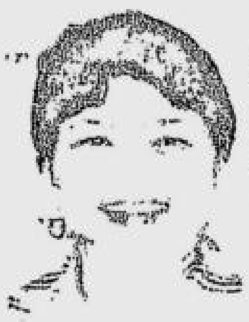

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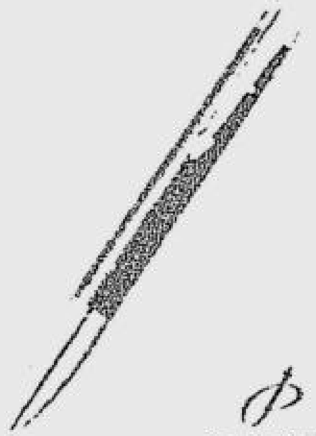

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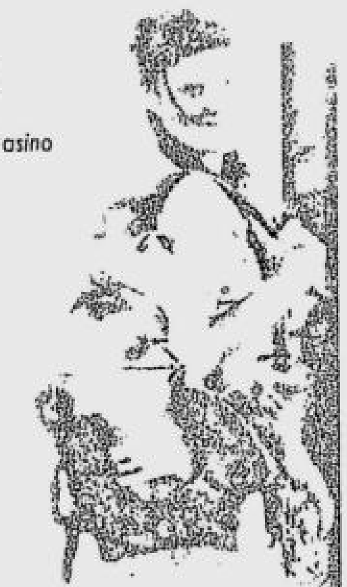

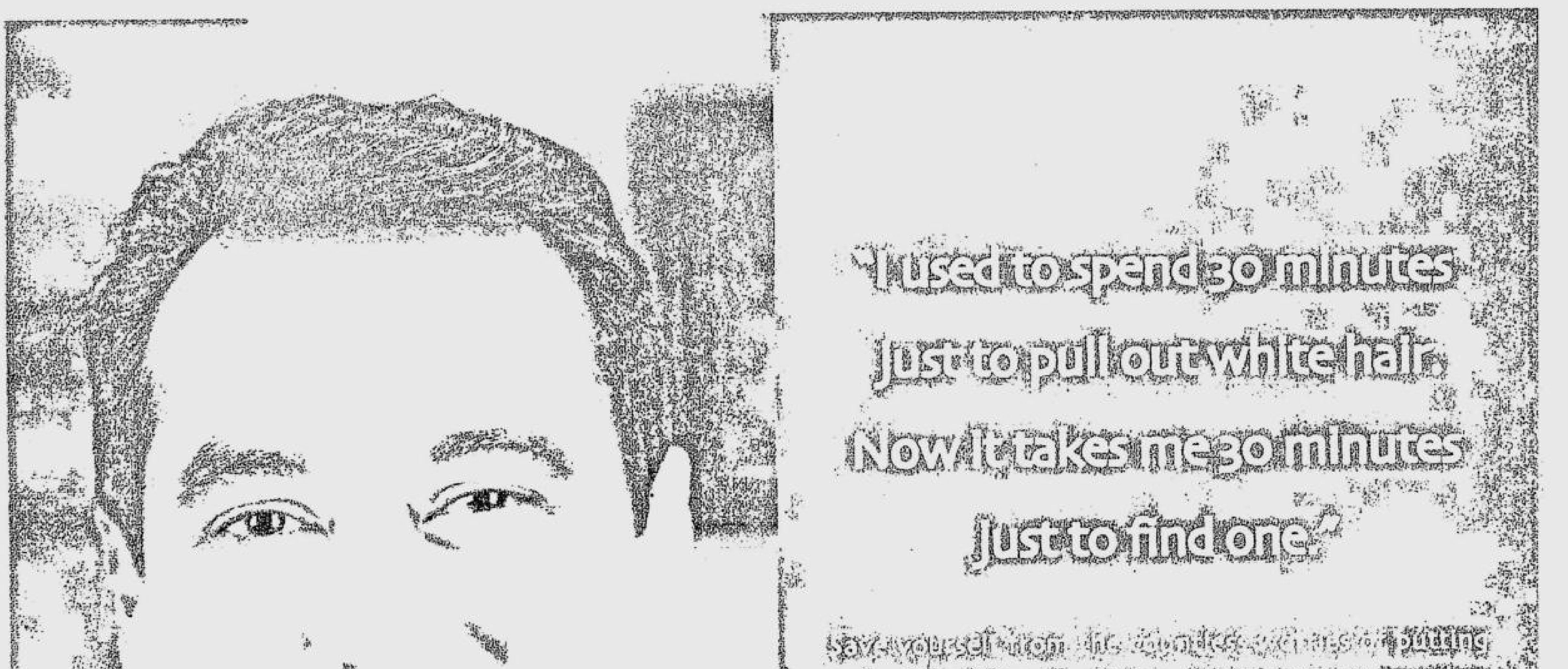

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BOCELLI with the Father Pio Symphony Orchestra

MANDY NAVASERO

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

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With an excellent sound system installed especially for this concert, both the singers and the orchestra were heard without untoward technical glitches, and the audience heard a well-balanced sound all over the place.

The Father Pio Symphony Orchestra (with most members coming from the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra under Rodel Colmenar) was in good shape, and their opening number (Preludio from Bizet's "Carmen") set the tone for the electrifying evening.

Finally, the Manila audience heard an Italian conductor with unquestionable credentials in the person of Maestro Marcello Rota. The conductor knew his music inside out and took pains to bring out the music's hidden nuances in that big hall. He let the music flow (some conductors merely read notes) with ease, and the big surprise was that he was an excellent accompanist for singers (a world-acclaimed Filipino tenor swore never to sing again in Manila until a resident conductor is eased out).

Under Maestro Rota, the Filipino orchestra rose to great heights, from the "Carmen" Preludio to the "Intermezzo from Cavalleria Rusticana to Rossini's L'Italiana in Algeri overture.

Dynamic range

No one was prepared to realize that a portion of Rodrigo's Concerto de Aranjuez for guitar has metamorphosed into a reinvented art song which opened Bocelli's solo parts. He skipped Giordano's Amor Ti Vieta and sang a religious favorite, Panis Angelicus, and here one got a live taste of the tenor's vocal range.

There is a recurring echo of the Pavarotti sound in Bocelli's voice, and when you close your eyes, he could be mistaken for Pavarotti.

Nevertheless, he negotiated Verdi's killer aria, Di Quella Pira (from Il Trovatore), with ease and managed to capture some intensity and drama (the Filipino tenor Otoniel Gonzaga is second to none in this aria when he sang it years back at the CCP, and the Romanian tenor who sang it in a CCP-Singapore Lyric Opera production of Il Trovatore a couple of years back at the CCP was a big letdown in this aria).

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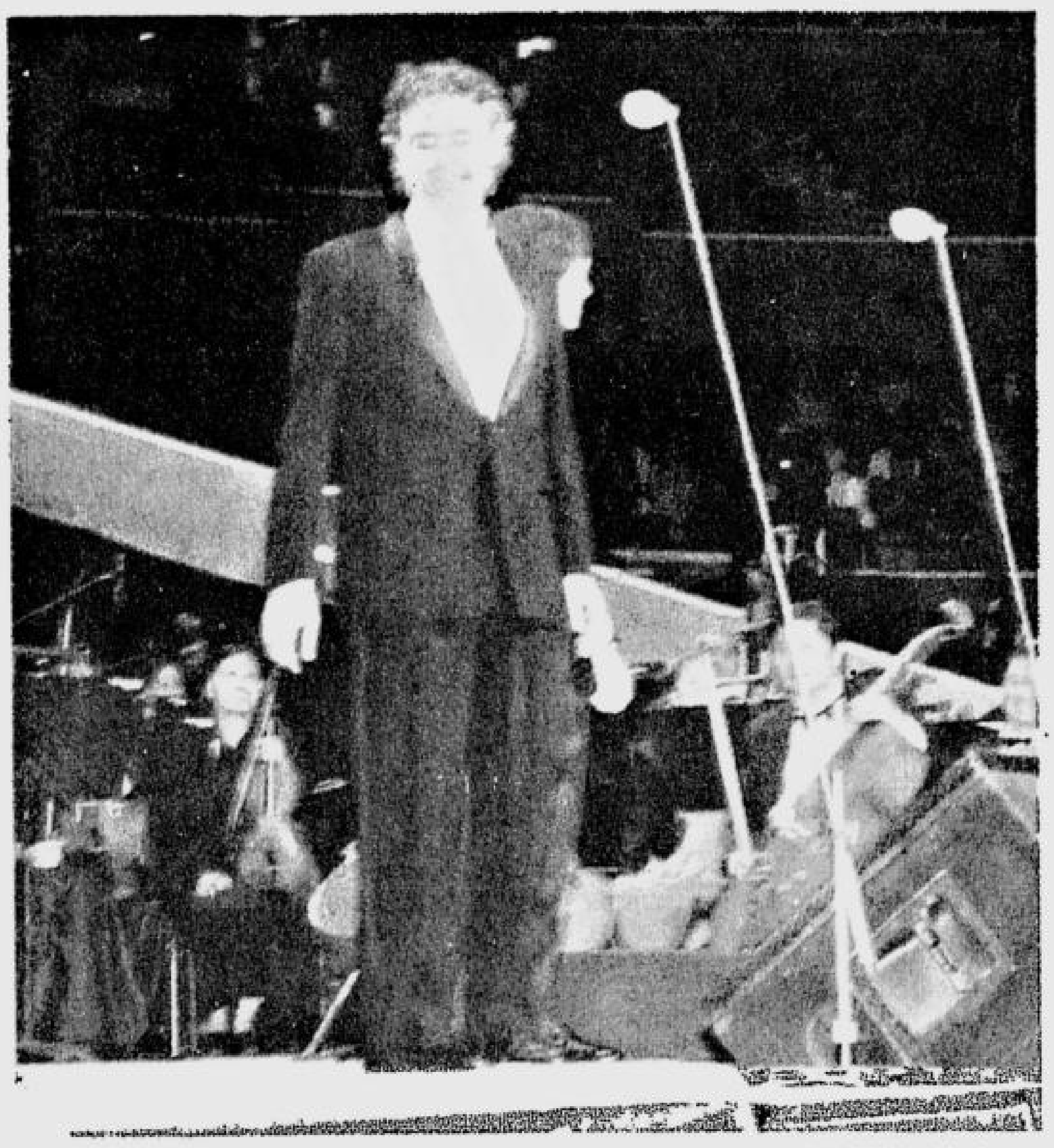

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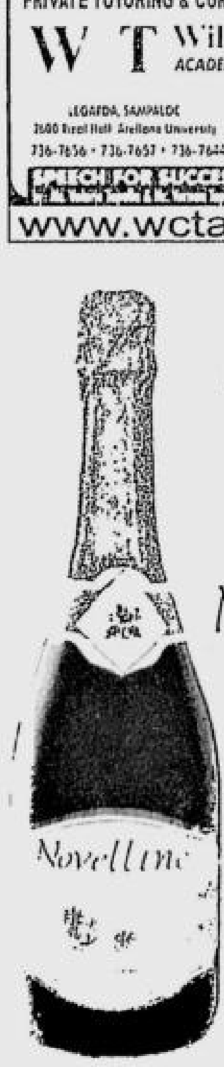

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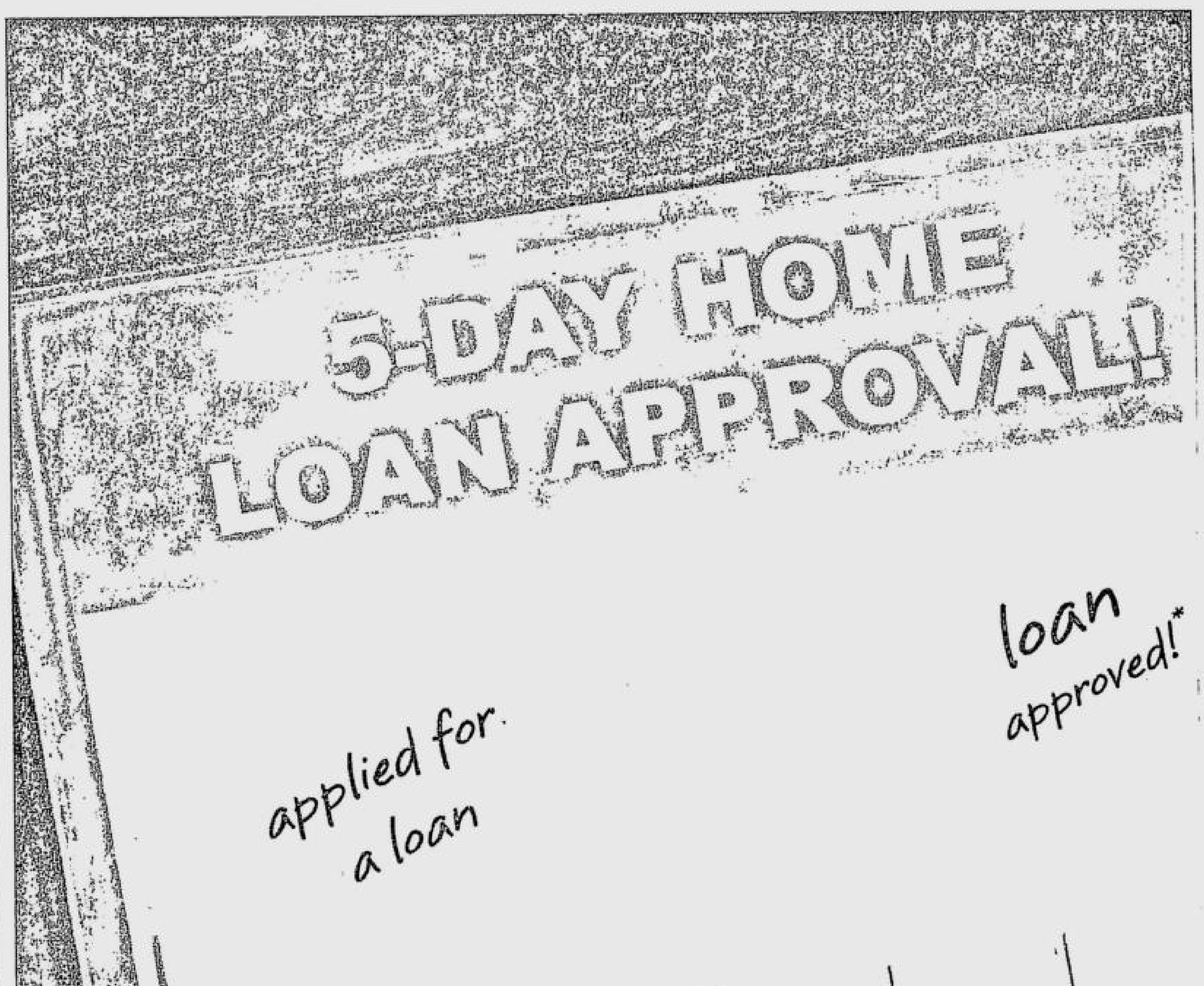

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BOCELLI gets a rousing standing ovation midway through his repertoire.
PHOTOS MANDY NAVASERO

BANTAY Bata's Gina Lopez, Vice President Teofisto Guingona and ABS-CBN's Gabby Lopez

AN AVID fan who was in coma for many years attends the concert in a wheelchair.

From page F1

His phrasing and overall interpretation tend to be predictable after the initial arias, but the emotions he managed to project were real and incontrovertible. Indeed, the man sings with his soul.

The last part of the concert was a typical crowd-pleaser devoted to favorite art songs and Neapolitan hits (Mattinata, Marechiare, Torna a Surriento and O Sole Mio, among others).

One must say that the soprano, Maria Luigia Borsi, was just as equally exciting vocally and visually (a cross between Demi Moore and Dina Bonnevie) and her artistry shone in her opening number, "O Mio Babbino Caro," from Puccini's Gianni Schicchi.

The singer has a sense of line, the phrasing is adorable and she not only sings her arias but actually acts them. Her vocal agility certainly was put to the test in Gounod's "Je Veux Vivre" (from Romeo et Juliette), to which the audience responded with great applause.

What I cannot understand is why she had to sing Lehar and De Curtis songs identified with Pavarotti hits. Likewise, I do not see any use for a soprano in the "duo" version of "O Sole Mio." But this concert is mainly for a celebrity tenor, and so I see the point.

It would be a coup to bring back this soprano in Manila and see why he is Ricardo Muti's choice as Violetta in the La Scala touring production of La Traviata.

(The last sensational, if controversial, Italian soprano to be heard in Manila after Renata Rebaldi was Tiziana Fabbricini, who walked out of the Manila Metropolitan Theater and told me before she left for the airport, "Pablo, I will not die of consumption in Traviata in this production. I will die from a school of mosquitos trailing me in every corner of the theater." I saw her Violetta in a La Scala production of Traviata in Tokyo also under Maestro Muti and she was sensational—except that she looked and sounded so much like Maria Callas.)

Box-office stampede

Manila should thank impresario Baby Arenas for bringing the Bocelli experience even to people who must have heard their first art songs and operatic arias at the Araneta Coliseum. The media role of ABS-CBN in this production showed that classical music, given unlimited exposure on TV, can translate into box-office stampede for Traviata and Boheme arias.

SOPRANO Luigia Borsi, tenor Andrea Bocelli, Baby Arenas and conductor Marcello Rota

(When ABS-CBN invited Cecile Licad to guest in a show dominated by the likes of Martin Nievera and Pops Fernandez, the predominantly pop crowd responded to Licad with a standing ovation in the middle of the program.)

The sight of 30,000 people listening intently to operatic arias was my first inkling that classical music can be appreciated in that crowd which was a blend of the elite and the *masa*, but mostly the latter.

The last classical concert seen at the Araneta Coliseum was pianist Van Cliburn with the CCP Philharmonic under the late Luis Valencia in the early '70s. The person who initiated it, Ms Imelda Marcos, was present in the Bocelli landmark concert in Manila.

After this sensational Bocelli concert, those who still think the *masa* can't hack classical music should think again.

Here and there

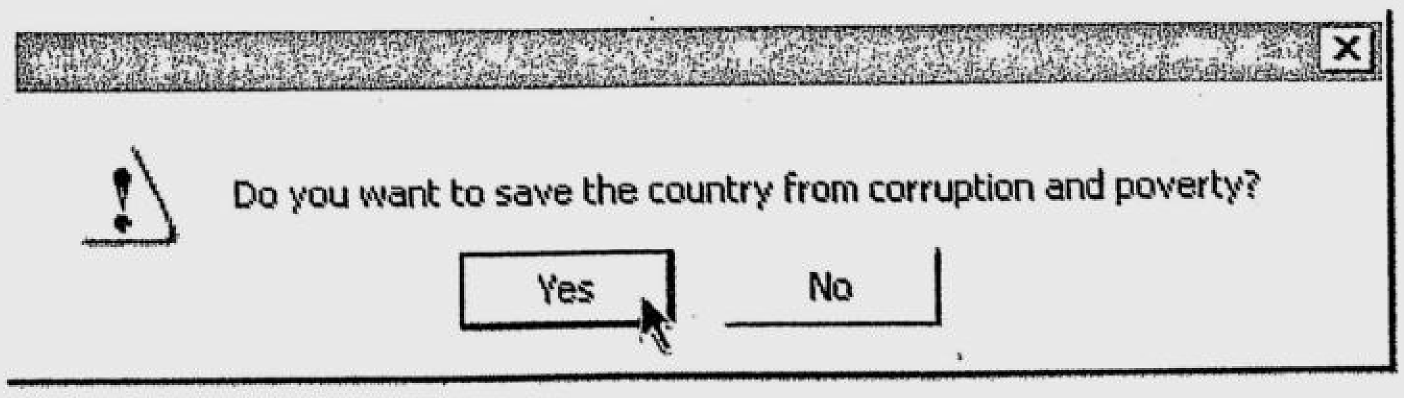
A slice of the Bocelli experience will be heard in Baguio City on May 15 at the Camp John Hay Trade and Cultural Center, with tenor Lemuel de la Cruz and soprano Joan Cano, with guest artist flutist GJ Herman Gomez and pianist Mary Anne Espina.

The arias for tenor and soprano that thrilled the Araneta Coliseum crowd will be heard in this concert planned weeks before Bocelli came.

The concert is sponsored by Camp John Hay Manor Hotel, which also hosted the celebrated Baguio return engagement of Cecile Licad last March 27. Call 0918-7376901 or (02) 9017156 for ticket inquiries.

Our condolence to the family of Nick Joaquin (National Artist for Literature) who passed away last week. Nick was our drinking buddy since the early '70s and he was one of the frequent concertgoers patronizing the Pasig Summer Music Festival at the Pasig Museum. He watched the tribute to tenor Octavio Cruz with sister Sarah and Billy Lacaba and I actually had an ice box full of San Miguel beer just for this special music festival guest. Nick, by the way, is *kumpare* of Cecile Licad. They were both godparents to Kris Lacaba, son of Pete Lacaba and Marra Lanot.

The 6th National Youth Summer Camp which started last April 12 at the campus of University of Rizal in Tanay town will wind up May 9 and in a recent presscon, conductor-composer Francisco Feliciano reiterated the fact that we should continue nurturing young talents no matter how politicians mess up or worsen the state of our musical life. He pointed out that in Korea, the government protects and encourages budding classical musicians, and with so many young talents in that country, they can actually form several symphony orchestras out of those young hopefuls in the music world.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Summer programs for kids and adults

THE EFFIE Nañas School of Classical Ballet (ENSCB) offers summer programs on Classical Ballet and Modern Jazz for kids and adults. ENSCB's first-rate teaching staff is headed by Effie Nañas, one of the country's ballet luminaries. Other notable members are Vivian Nolasco and former Ballet Philippines soloists Krisbelle Paclibar and Verna Fajilan.

The studio, located at 4/F Shangri-La Plaza Mall, also offers Aerobics, Belly Dancing and Martial Arts, including Taekwondo and Kickboxing.

The summer programs will run until May 31, with a recital as the culminating activity. Call 6337871.

Call for 'Cabaret' auditions

RITO Asilo

MONIQUE Wilson

THE NEW Voice Company (NVC), one of Asia's leading and most progressive theater groups, announces auditions on May 8, Saturday, 1 p.m.-5 p.m. for its 10th-anniversary production, Kander and Ebb's "Cabaret."

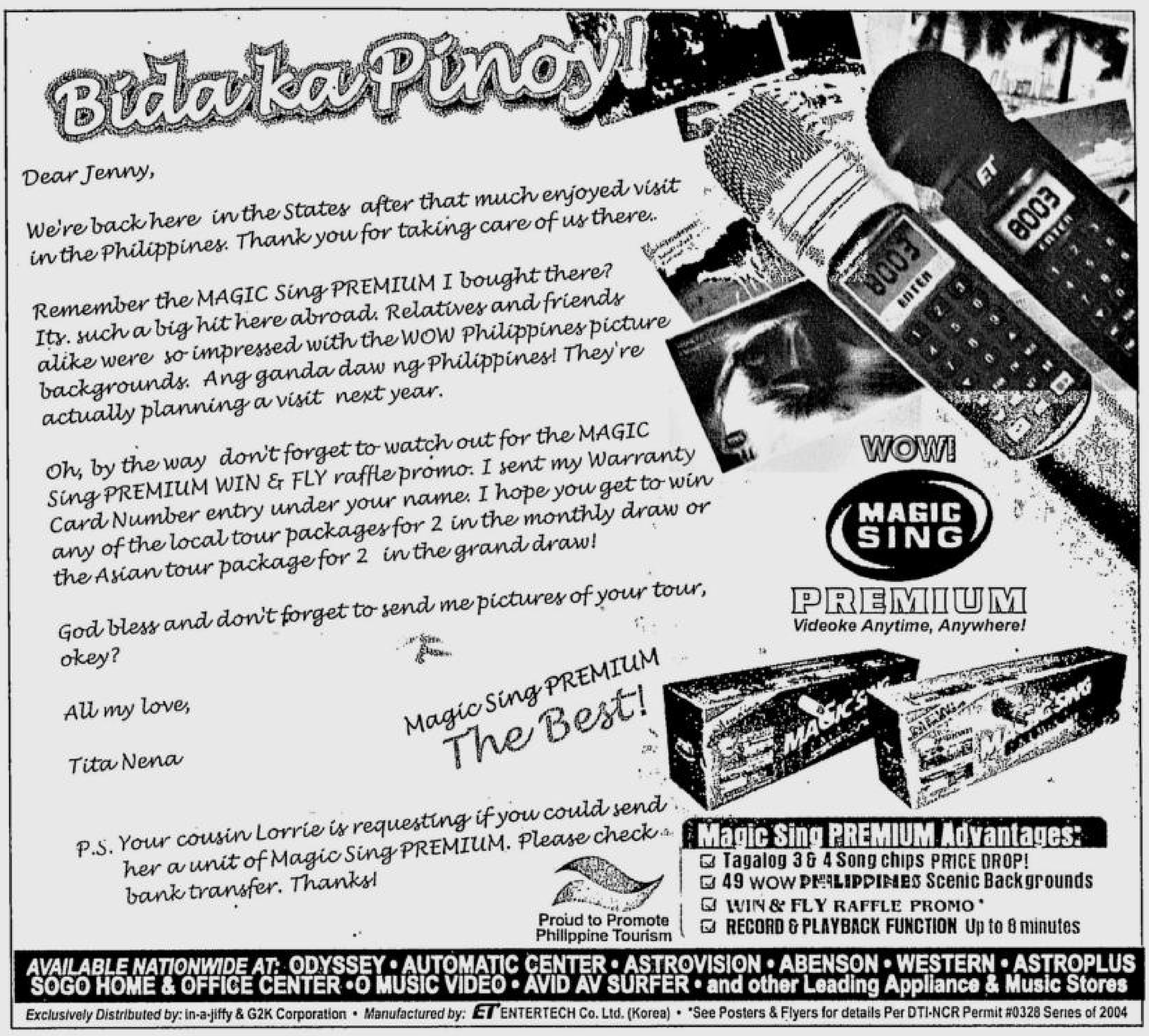
The production will hew to the new and critically acclaimed version reimagined by Sam Mendes (director of "American Beauty" and "The Road to Perdition").

The Philippine production will be co-directed by NVC associate artistic director Rito Asilo, director of NVC's Asia-wide hit, "The Vagina Monologues," and, recently, the highly-acclaimed "Stones in His Pockets," and NVC artistic director Monique Wilson, who will also return to the legitimate stage as Sally Bowles, a role originated by Judi Dench and recently revived by Natasha Richardson.

Wilson, who has starred in international plays and musicals, has also directed highly praised theatrical pieces that raised funds for various causes. She recently finished her MA in drama (with distinction) at London's prestigious Central School of Speech and Drama.

Asilo is no stranger to musical theater, either. He has starred in a number of musicals, including "Falsettos," Ryan Cayabyab and Nestor Torre's long-running "Magnificat," Gines Tan's "Magsimula Ka" and has essayed plum roles in plays like "Stop Kiss" and "Padre Pio," among others. He took up classes at London's exclusive Actors Centre and is currently an INQUIRER editor.

The "Cabaret" casting call is open to actors and actresses 18 years old and above who can act, sing and move. Prepare two songs (minus-one or a cappella) that will showcase your singing range and acting ability. Bring a resume and 3x5 photos. The most anticipated musical of the year will open on Nov. 5 at the Music Museum. Call NVC Actors Studio at 8966695, 8965497; or e-mail nvc@pscific.net.ph.



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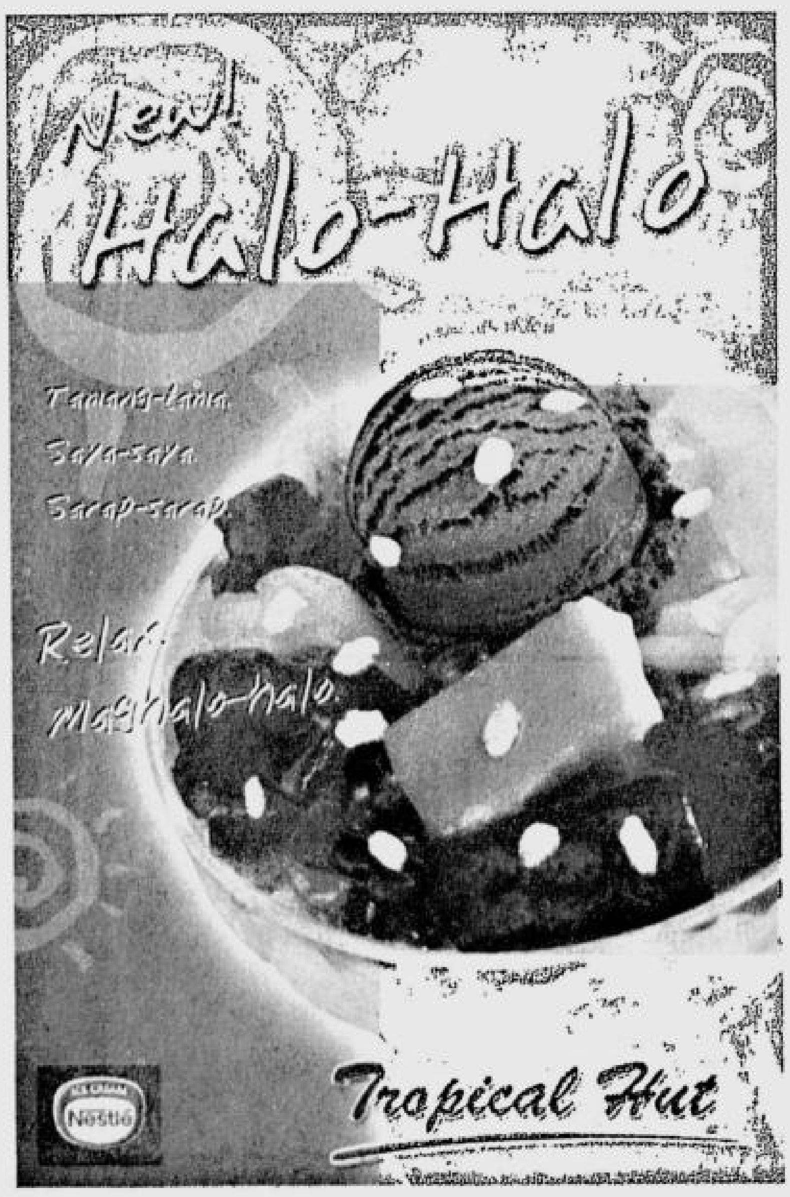

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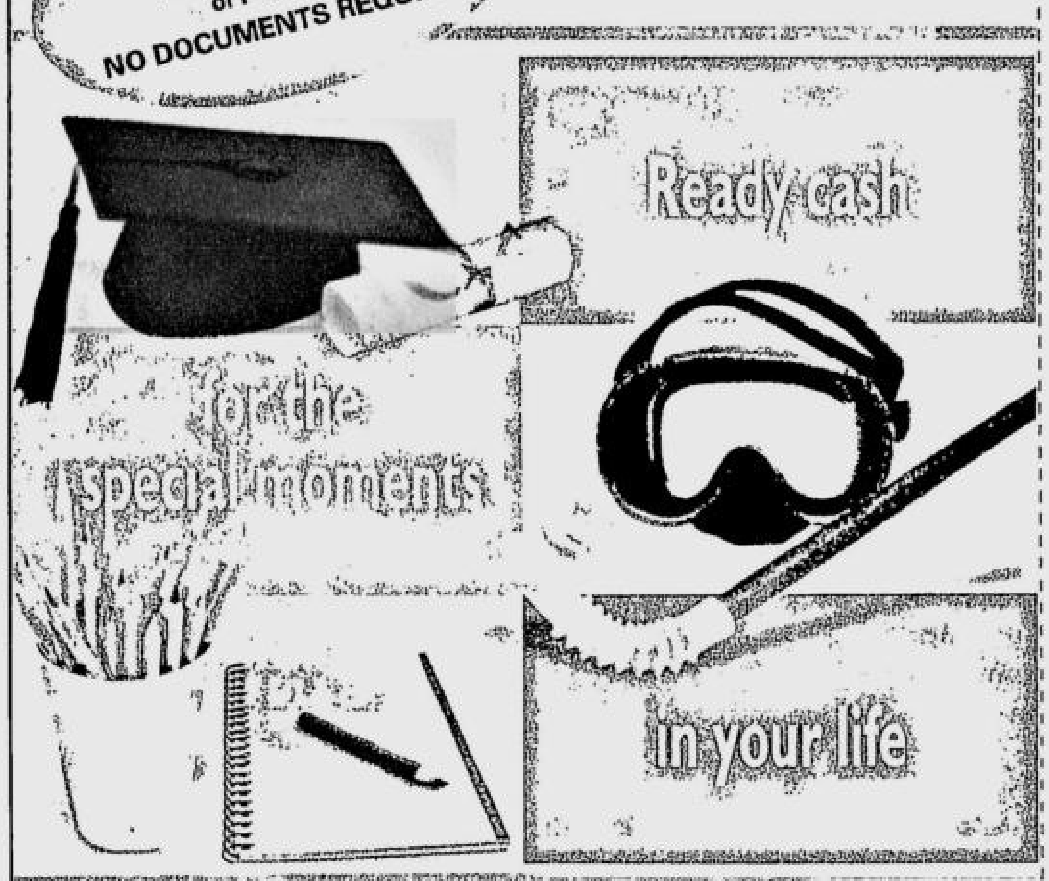

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Dance workshop and recital

FORTY-FOUR participants in the "Sayaw" workshop organized by the Bayanihan Philippine National Dance Company, Philippine Women's University Center for Arts and Culture and Cultural Center of the Philippines took part in a recital at the CCP to show off what they learned during the two-week intensive course.

Of the total number of participants, 24 participated in the children's workshop, 12 in the teen's workshop and eight in the dance enthusiasts' category. The workshop taught them the rudiments of Philippine folk dance, folk songs and playing ethnic music.

"An innovation in this year's workshop is the granting of loyalty awards to members who have consistently attended the summer workshop for three, four and even five summers," said Isabel A. Santos, Bayanihan's artistic and costume director. "Surely, such dedication and love for folk dance and music deserves to be recognized."

Those who received Bayanihan Summer Workshop Loyalty Awards were Mikaela Helane Reyes, Noelle Clarifel Khristeen Tolin, Ma. Monica Michelle Nalda and Celine Bernice Roxas.

The participants spent the last five days of the course practicing the repertoire for "Sayaw" which included dances that originated from the different regions of the country like the Paseo de Iloilo, Polka Recreo, Tachok, Kini Kini and Mangalay. A team of competent Bayanihan dancers headed by Ferdinand Jose, Bayanihan choreographer and dance director, patiently taught the workshop participants.

"This was another successful summer workshop and we would like to thank all those who participated in the workshop, especially the parents of our children workshop attendants," said Suzie Moya Benitez, Bayanihan executive director. "We will continue with our mission to have more and more Filipinos appreciate our dance culture."

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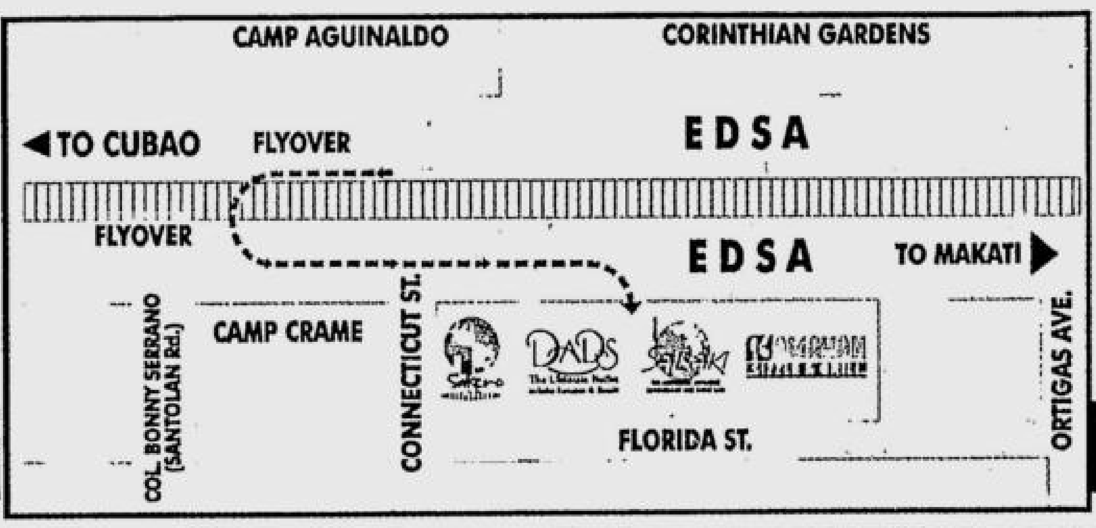

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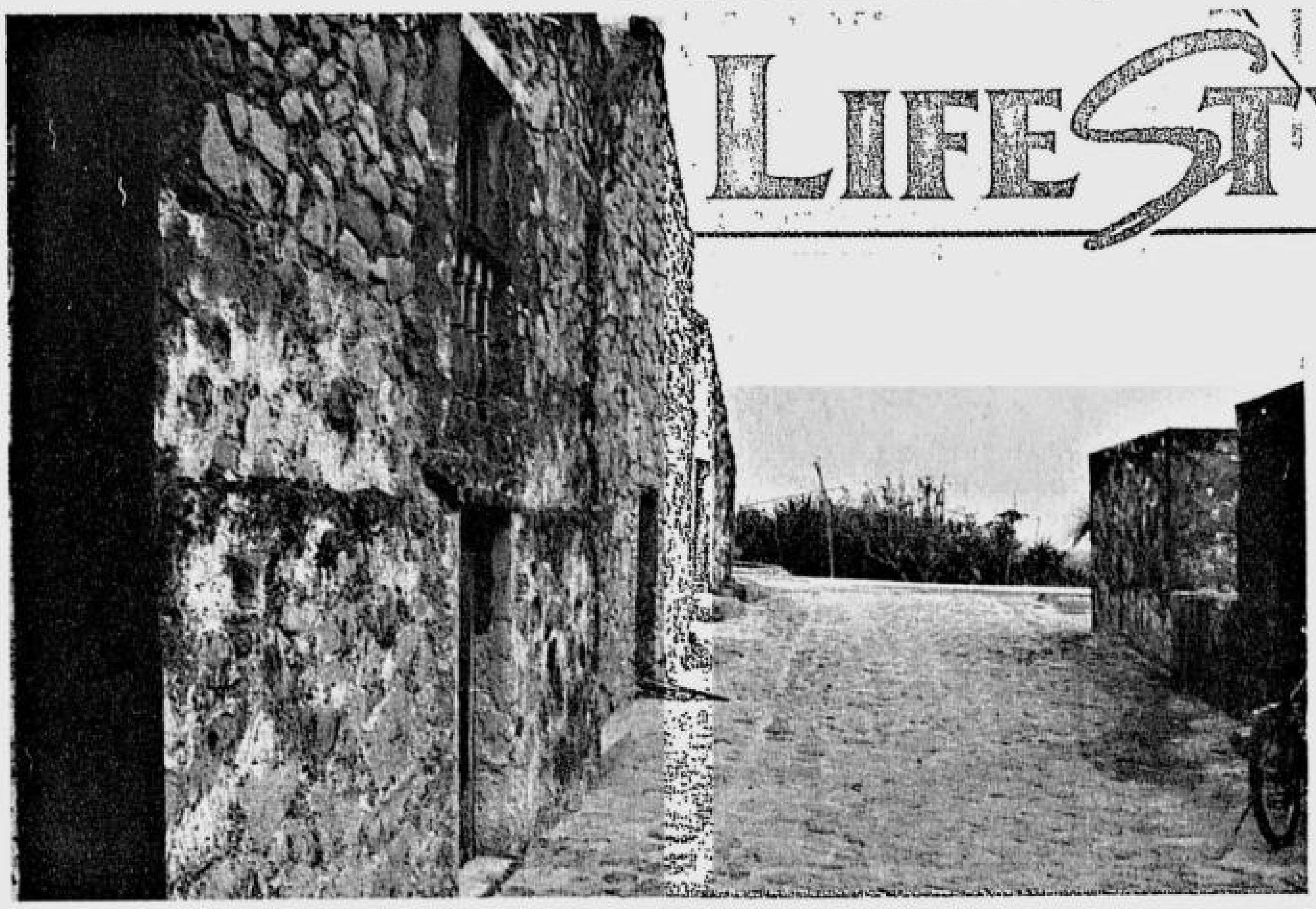
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Preserving heritage landscapes

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

IN MARCH 2004, US-Icomos (International Council for Monuments and Sites) organized the symposium "Learning from World Heritage: Lessons from International Preservation and Stewardship of Cultural and Ecological Landscapes of Global Significance," in Natchitoches, Louisiana.

Cultural landscapes are the result of a long interaction between man and nature. Landscape conservation is of particular relevance to the Philippines where the premier rice-growing landscape in the world is located.

The Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras was inscribed on the Unesco World Heritage List as the first "evolved or continuing landscape." A continuing landscape is one still used for the original purpose that it was built for, and that is still inhabited by the culture that produced it.

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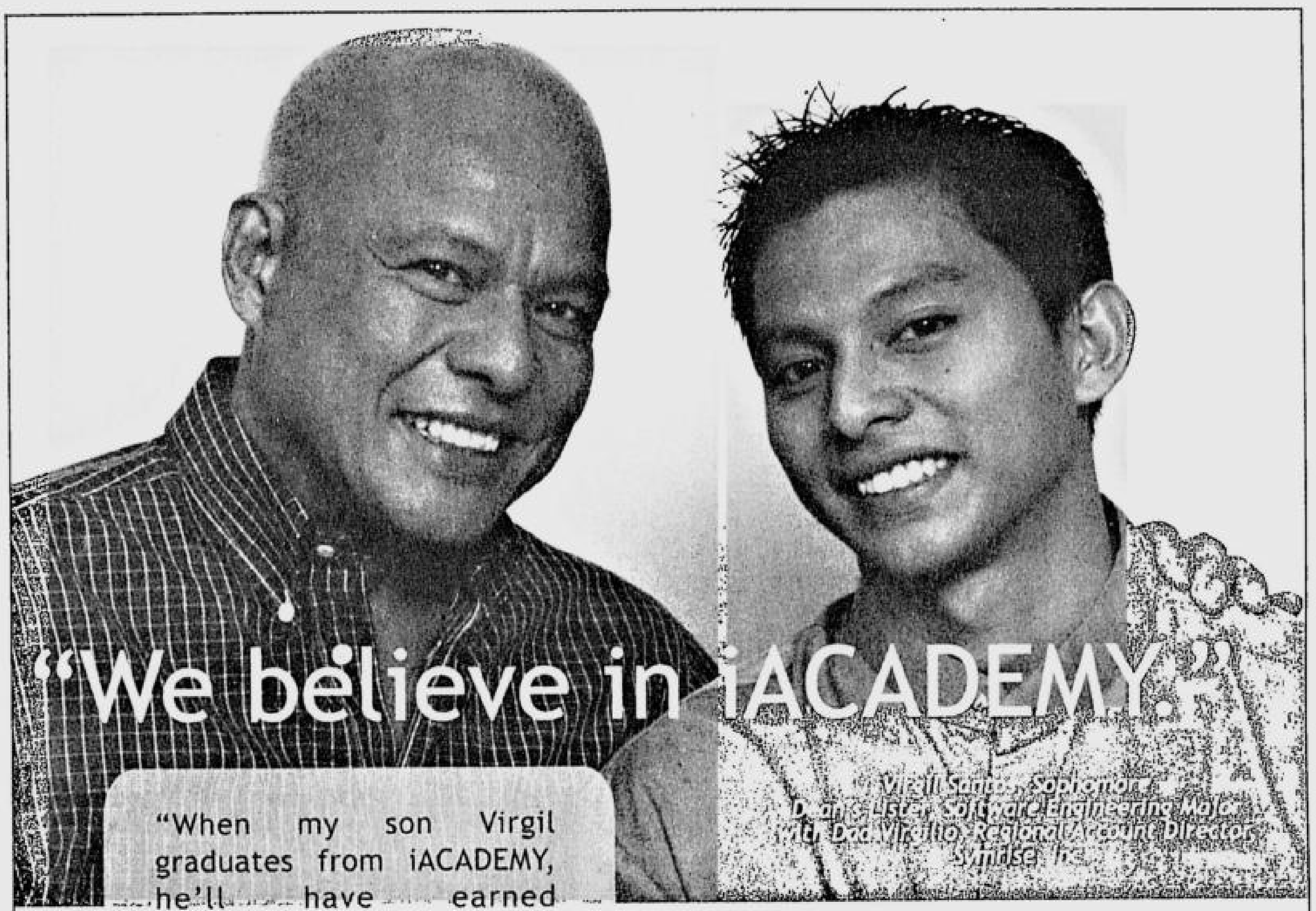
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Preserving heritage landscapes

From page G1

ties, the site was the first cultural landscape to be inscribed on the World Heritage in Danger List.

World Heritage Convention guidelines were amended in 1992 to include cultural landscapes, and since then, 36 sites have been listed. Twenty-two of these sites are in the "evolved, continuing landscapes" category where people and nature dwell together.

Emerging field

The preservation of landscapes is a rapidly emerging field that has redefined conceptual as well as managerial principles in conservation. Due to the combination of man-made and natural elements in a cultural landscape, its preservation has thrust the natural and cultural heritage professions into unprecedented cooperation.

The symposium was a chance for them to put their heads together, and, in the end, they adopted a declaration of principles and recommendations addressed to heritage professionals, national and international authorities, institutions and international organizations.

To strengthen the understanding of cultural landscapes and the inter-disciplinary need for its preservation, there is a need to:

- Pursue an inter-disciplinary approach between cultural and natural heritage professionals to identify, document, designate and manage heritage landscapes;
- Pursue global theme studies of landscape typologies;
- Strengthen the collaboration of Icomos and IUCN (International Conservation Union) in identifying, evaluating, monitoring, and reporting on heritage landscapes within the context of the World Heritage Convention;
- Press forward international training and understanding to build capacity in the community and professional level.

In responding to threats which now pressure landscapes, the following require attention:

- Prepare for changes in land use posing challenges to cultural landscapes such as agricultural changes and tourism pressure;
- Improve the system to provide rapid intervention and mobilize resources for heritage landscapes under threat;
- Provide guidelines to aid in the development of sustainable tourism for heritage landscapes.

Cultural landscapes intertwine communities with the landscape. Local knowledge and traditional skills that both imprint and sustain heritage landscapes should be studied, understood and respected in the preservation process.

TRADITIONAL *tongkonan* houses with sweeping thatched roofs in the Tana Toraja highlands of Sulawesi in Indonesia are an integral part of the rice-paddy landscape.

Community involvement

Communities should be involved in the preservation of their landscape, stressing the need to:

- Foster development of Icomos guidelines and principles for the inclusion of consultative community-based processes in the planning and management of heritage landscapes;
- Support the understanding and continuation of traditional practices in the stewardship of heritage landscapes;
- Recognize that multi-values are present in heritage landscapes and that multi-voices, especially strong community engagement, need to be brought out for effective protection and management.

Constant advocacy and promotion is required to establish national and international cooperation, stressing the need to:

- Use heritage landscape conservation to promote sustainable approaches to international cooperation among nations and peoples;
- Encourage nations to conduct national thematic studies of landscape types: agricultural, land and water migration routes, pilgrim trails, etc.;
- Provide guidelines for national legislation for the protection of cultural landscapes, including watershed management, transboundary areas and buffer zones;
- Demonstrate how recognition of heritage landscapes can provide economic benefits.

Cultural landscapes show that the conservation of heritage goes beyond the preservation of an isolated, single building. Proper conservation includes the preservation of its setting as well. It conserves the entire book rather than just one chapter within it.

Human factor

Preserving cultural landscapes includes all the factors that have contributed to making that landscape. The actual conservation of the physical aspects of the landscape—walls, canals, villages and reforestation—are usually the simplest to achieve.

What is more difficult to strengthen in the conservation of a landscape is the human factor. Communities continue to make a living in the same landscape as their ancestors despite the web of threats posed by the 21st century.

Life in a heritage landscape is often difficult, as seen in the rice terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras.

The young leave for education and remain in the cities where there are more economic opportunities. The older generation who remains cannot cope with the agricultural and maintenance demands of the site.

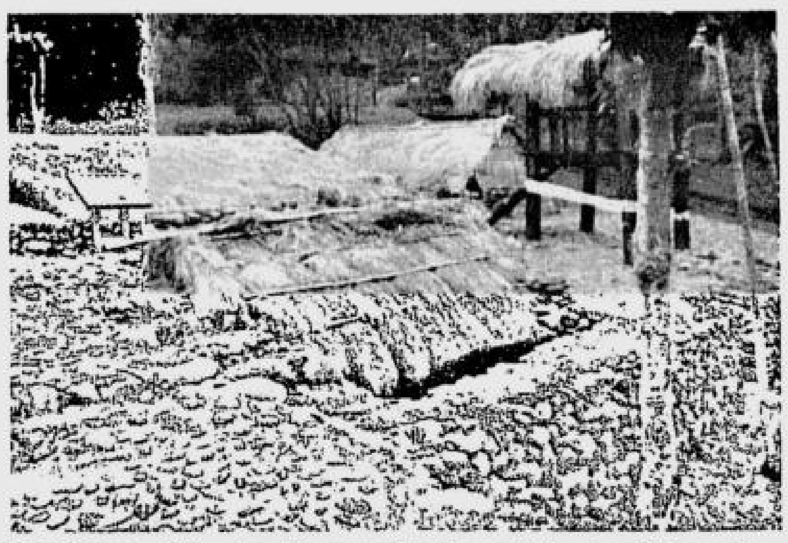
There are many paradoxes. Traditional culture should be maintained because it is the basis for the continued life of the site.

However, communities should not be frozen in time but should enjoy all 21st-century benefits. Outdated agricultural methods need modernizing but traditional agricultural beliefs and systems should be maintained.

At the rice terraces, life is the central issue. How does a lifestyle that really is no longer compatible with today make the jump into the 21st century while keeping its culture intact?

The Natchitoches declaration on Cultural Landscapes focuses attention on some of the issues threatening the future of cultural landscapes. It is up to us to make the Declaration relevant to our national cultural landscapes and to our approach in preserving them for future generations.

Visit www.icomos.org/usicomos for more information on the Natchitoches Declaration. Please e-mail your comments and feedback to afvillalon@hotmail.com



SHOULD traditional architecture like the vanishing Lan Yu house in Southern Taiwan be replicated for tourists in outdoor museum settings?

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Exhibit melds art and pop culture

THE INTERFACE between contemporary art and popular culture is explored in a five-exhibition series titled "Danas: Philippine Culture and Contemporary Art," which opens its second installment titled "Sapin" (juxtaposition), on May 6 at the CCP Bulwagang Fernando Amorsolo.

Curated by Professor Patrick Flores, "Sapin" will feature works by Roberto Feleo and Manuel Ocampo, together with Joey Gosiengfiao's film "Temptation Island," thereby situating contemporary art in the context of a popular tradition broadly regarded as "Filipino."

"Sapin" runs until June 6, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. daily except Mondays. Admission is free. Call 8323702.

Summer photography workshop for beginners

THE MANDY Navasero Summer Photoworkshop Batch 2004, now on its 19th year, offers the most fun that photo enthusiasts may have this summer in pursuit of creativity and photographic adventures.

Students "learn by doing" as they are placed in practical working situations and provided with organized instruction materials covering important aspects of photography. This approach enables them to develop a high degree of competence and creative ability as a beginner.

Navasero obtained her BA in Photography major in Illustration and Advertising from the Brooks Institute of Photographic Arts and Sciences in Santa Barbara, California. She has photographed the country's leading personalities, politicians and business leaders as well as resorts, aerial and underwater scenes and commercial products.

Conducted for seven weeks, the topics to be covered in the course include operations for both 35mm SLR and digital cameras, which students will use during the workshop; basic principles of light, exposure, how to develop your eye, lenses and glossaries, photography as composition and tips for aspiring photographers.

Weekly assignments and critiques are given in portraiture, abstract, line, shapes and objects, light and texture, with the students going on actual shoots during out-of-town trips and visits to galleries and museums.

Lectures are held every Saturday, 2-5 p.m., until May 29. The workshop is open to students, interior designers, architects, housewives, doctors and hobbyists, 15 years old and above. Participants should have their own 35mm camera with interchangeable lens, preferably 105mm, 20mm or 28mm or digital cameras.

At the end of the workshop, participants will present their work in a photo exhibit-cum-graduation.

Registration is ongoing at Mandy Navasero PhotoPRo Studio at Rm. 227, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St. (formerly Reposo St.), Bel-Air II Village, Makati City. Call 8991767 and 8963208 or email mn_photocom@I-manila.com.ph or mandynavaseropro@yahoo.com

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PLDT-DPC art contest winners

THE ANNUAL PLDT-DPC Telephone Directory Cover Visual Art National Competition this year carried the theme, "The Filipino Youth: Making A Difference."

The contest offers not only cash incentives, tax-free to the winners, but provides what any self-respecting aspiring artist wants: the chance to see his work exhibited or published. The top five winning entries will be on the cover of a telephone directory to be published by PLDT and DPC.

Jaypee Samson of UP Diliman bested 57 other young artists from 20 schools for the grand prize. He won P70,000 and a trophy. The winning entry, titled "Huwarang Hangarin: Kabataan, Pag-asa Pa Rin ng Bayan!", will be featured in the 2004-2005 Metro Manila PLDT-DPC telephone directory.

As the winning school, UP received a P30,000 donation and a plaque.

Samson, the youngest of four siblings, is the first grand prize winner from the state university in 18 years. His brother Jerson placed fourth in this contest seven years ago.

Samuel Bulaga of Technological University of the Philippines was in second place with "Munting Pangarap ng mga Batang Pinoy," while Joven Mansit of UP Diliman placed third with "One-Cycled Dreams."

Other winners and their prizes include Argel Joseph Penasbo of Far Eastern University ("Ang Puno ng Mga Bagong Sibol"), fourth prize; and Edward Allan Valdez Garcia of Far Eastern University ("Ang Kabataang Isinusulat ang Tadhana at Pangarap sa Espasyo ng Dilim, Nguni't May Kaakibat na Liwanag"), fifth prize.

Andrei Colinares of Far Eastern University ("Pamana ng Idol Kong Si Kuya Pepe..."), Erwin Lloyd Sumang of Philippine Women's University ("Kabataan ng Ating Bansa, Tulay sa Magandang Kinabukasan") and Yveese Belen of University of Sto. Tomas ("Elemento ng Pag-hubog at Paglinang sa mga Bagong Kabataan") were named first, second and third honorable mentions, respectively, and received plaques.

The board of judges included installation art pioneer Junyee; multi-awarded glass sculptor Ramon Orlina; Sid Gomez Hildawa, who heads the Cultural Center of the Philippines' visual, literature and media arts department; mixed media painter and print maker Imelda Cajipe Endaya; and painter and performance artist Jeho Bitancor.

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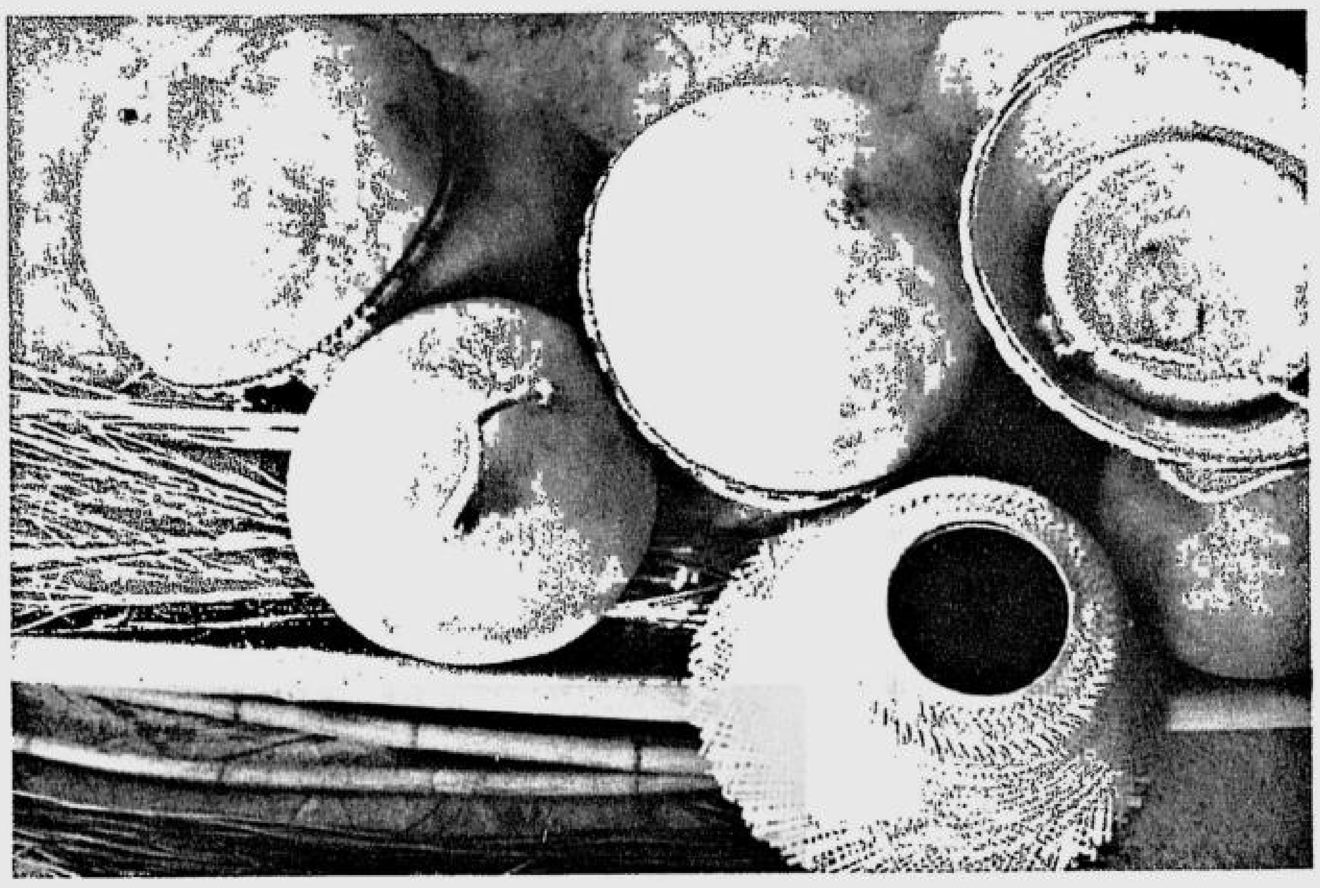

RAW DEAL. The Mandacs of Barangay Bongtolan lay out some of their unfinished *kattokong* and the materials used in the trade.

PHOTOS BY CHITO VECINA

END OF AN ERA. Casimiro Mandac (left) and son Liberato are the last of Vigan's long line of *kattokong* makers.

The dying art of the 'kattokong'

With only a father and his son practicing it in the entire Ilocos, the craft of natural hatmaking is an endangered folk art

By Cheche V. Moral

THE STATUS symbol of a previous era, the *kattokong* may soon become just a wonderful piece of memory, trailing the path of the now vanished generations of illustrious Ilocanos who had proudly once worn it.

The Ilocano craft of making hats out of a large round species of *upo* (gourd, or *tabungaw* in Ilocano) is regrettably fading so quickly that there seems no hope of preserving it for the next generation. Alas, the younger generation is indifferent to it.

"They say it's difficult," says Liberato Mandac in Ilocano. "They find learning it frustrating."

Liberato, 58, and his father, Casimiro, are the only remaining *kattokong* makers in Barangay Bongtolan in Vigan City, where *kattokong* was once a dynamic industry. Liberato's wife, who learned from her own mother, is also skilled in the craft.

"These younger kids have had higher education, so they prefer to find work elsewhere," says the older Mandac. "We can't force them."

Kattokong makes use of a rounded variety of gourd as opposed to the more popular longish *upo*. The edible gourd is cut in half (the lower part is discarded), then the seeds and flesh are scraped off. It is soaked in water for several days; drying under the sun takes a few more days.

The inner part of the hat is lined with woven fine bamboo slats. The hardest part, say the Mandacs, is thinly cutting and weaving the delicate *nito*-grass edging of the hat. This step alone takes two days for a single hat. As a final touch, the hat is varnished.

The *kattokong* may now be too costume-y for the modern-day Ilocanos' everyday getup, but the demand for the traditional hat has not stopped. Sensing perhaps that *kattokong* is rapidly fading, there has been no shortage of orders from public officials and prominent Bigueños. The Mandacs have had to turn some of them away because of lack of materials.

Nito, sourced from the forests of Cagayan Valley, is hard to come by. It can also be pretty costly. "Our suppliers are scared to go up the mountains, fearing encounter with rebels," Liberato says. He plants his own *upo*, but since the rare species is hard to grow, he also has to source elsewhere.

The hats don't come cheap, priced according to class (there are four) starting at P800. A personalized order, where the owner's name is woven into the edging, is first class, and costs P1,300.

Casimiro says he taught his children the art of *kattokong* making. He remembers wistfully the days when they would deliver *kattokong* by the hundreds to Baguio and Ermita in Manila.

Once, Casimiro was invited to teach the craft in Bangued, Abra, but the 82-year-old had to turn it down. He's too old and weak to make the trip, he says.

By the look of things, it seems inevitable the *kattokong* tradition would end with this old man and his son.

The Vigan tour was sponsored by Globe Telecom.

E-mail the author cmoral@inquirer.com.ph

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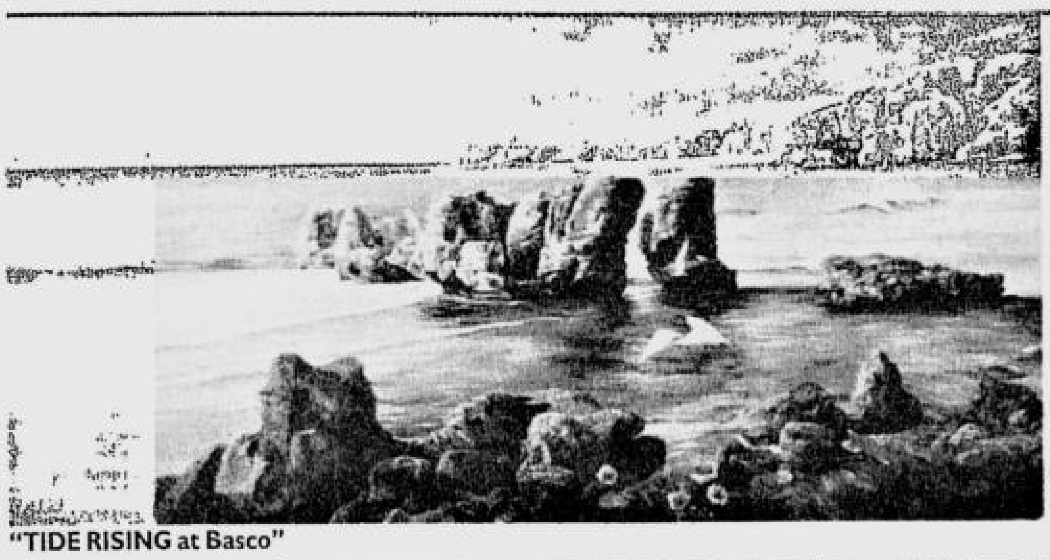
The (Blanco) son also rises


"TIDE RISING at Basco"

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

ON APRIL 25, 2000, unidentified men broke into the Blanco Family Museum in Angono, Rizal, and made off with 11 works of the master painter Jose "Pitok" Blanco.

The paintings were never recovered, although one Cebu collector reported that an unknown man was trying to sell him one of the works.

Blanco's paintings have become so valuable that they are now the target of art thieves. What remains now are souvenir photos of the stolen works, and these are in a bare corner of the Blanco museum titled "Years of Struggle."

Blanco, 71, a godson of National Artist Carlos "Botong" Francisco, has passed on his talent to his seven children and 11 grandchildren. All of

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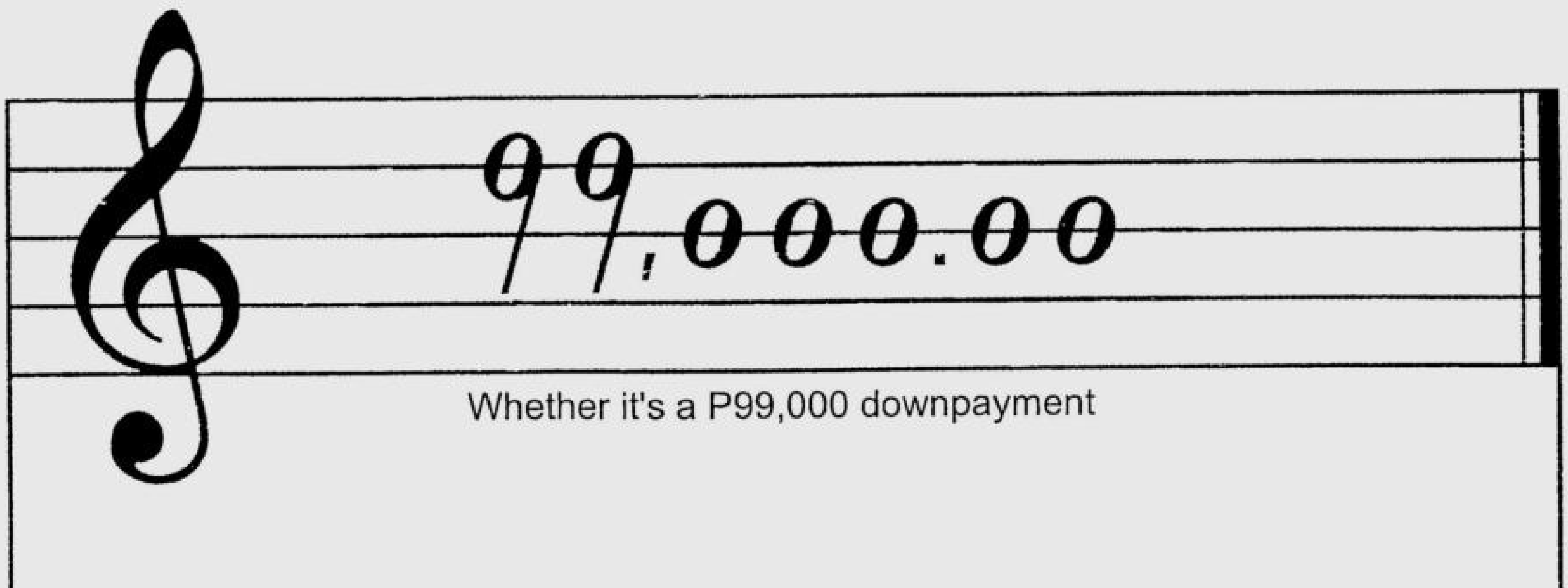

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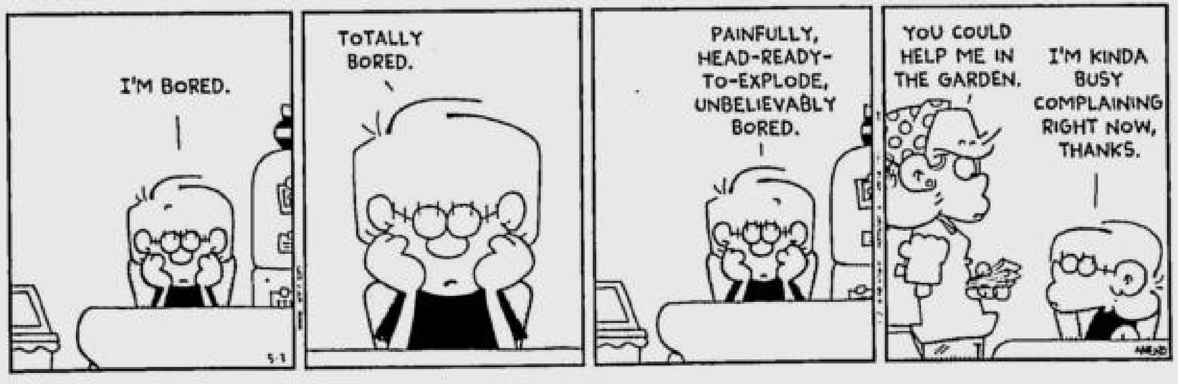
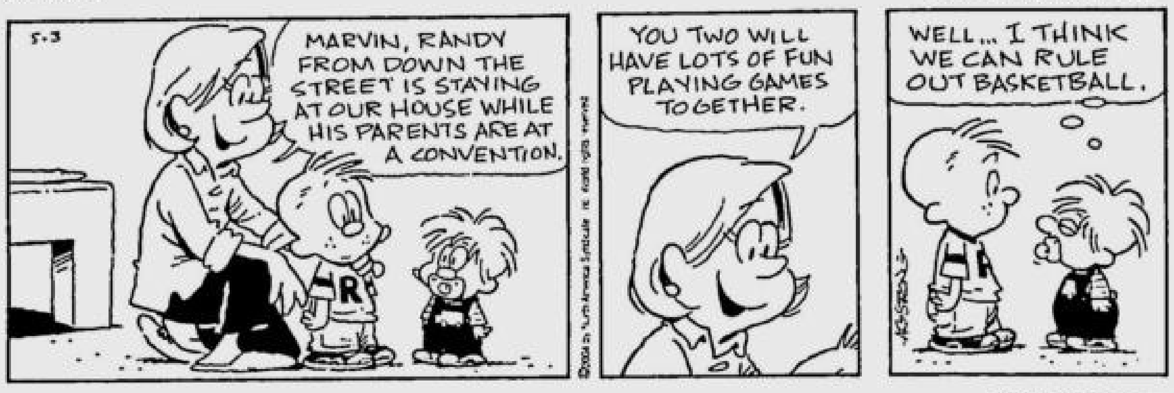
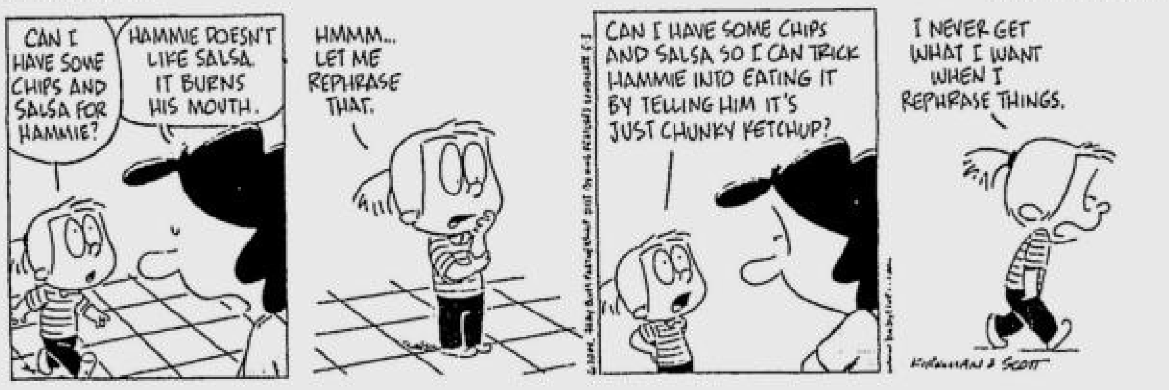

I'M BORED.
TOTALLY BORED.
PAINFULLY, HEAD-READY-TO-EXPLODE, UNBELIEVABLY BORED.
YOU COULD HELP ME IN THE GARDEN.
I'M KINDA BUSY COMPLAINING RIGHT NOW, THANKS.

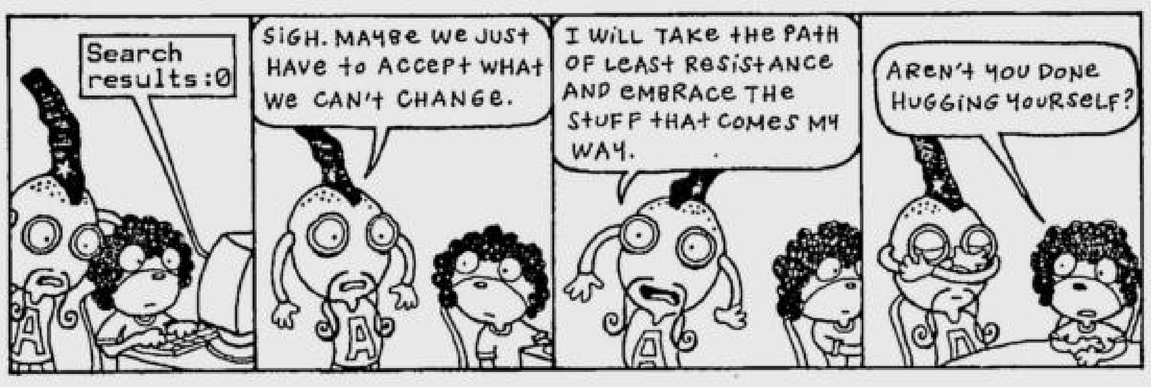
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


5-3
MARVIN, RANDY FROM DOWN THE STREET IS STAYING AT OUR HOUSE WHILE HIS PARENTS ARE AT A CONVENTION.
YOU TWO WILL HAVE LOTS OF FUN PLAYING GAMES TOGETHER.
WELL... I THINK WE CAN RULE OUT BASKETBALL.

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


CAN I HAVE SOME CHIPS AND SALSA FOR HAMMIE?
HAMMIE DOESN'T LIKE SALSA. IT BURNS HIS MOUTH.
HMMM... LET ME REPHRASE THAT.
CAN I HAVE SOME CHIPS AND SALSA SO I CAN TRICK HAMMIE INTO EATING IT BY TELLING HIM IT'S JUST CHUNKY KETCHUP?
I NEVER GET WHAT I WANT WHEN I REPHRASE THINGS.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Search results:0
SIGH. MAYBE WE JUST HAVE TO ACCEPT WHAT WE CAN'T CHANGE.
I WILL TAKE THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE AND EMBRACE THE STUFF THAT COMES MY WAY.
AREN'T YOU DONE HUGGING YOURSELF?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Because you are naturally clever and charming, you have the ability to teach others. You know what people want. You have high standards for yourself and others. You are a practical, down-to-earth resource for your family. People need you. Expect major, exciting changes this year. (Perhaps as significant as those that occurred in 1995.)
Birthdate of: Niccolo Machiavelli, writer; Pete Seeger, singer; James Brown, soul artist.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Finally, the delays and goof-ups that you experienced in the past month or so will be reduced. You can trust that you can move forward with more success. (Mercury is no longer retrograde in your sign.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): In some ways, you've felt like you were walking in quicksand lately. Two steps forward, one step back. All that is history. Make plans for future projects with confidence!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're ruled by Mercury, and it's been retrograde for weeks now. That's why old friends popped up out of nowhere. It's also why you thought you were losing it. You weren't; you're fine. Everything's back to normal now.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Serious projects that you've had on the back burner might get an approving nod from your boss now. Everything seems to flow much easier! (You can count on this.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Get serious about plans to return to school or to promote your activities in publishing or the media. Ditto for law and medicine.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Now that the dust has settled about shared property, you know where you stand. Accept what is, and quit struggling. Get on with your life.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Many of you have had to deal with ex-partners lately. All that is behind you now. Make exciting travel plans, because you deserve it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Delays and glitches have plagued you at work for some time now. This problem is over. You can work with confidence, knowing that your job is no longer hexed.

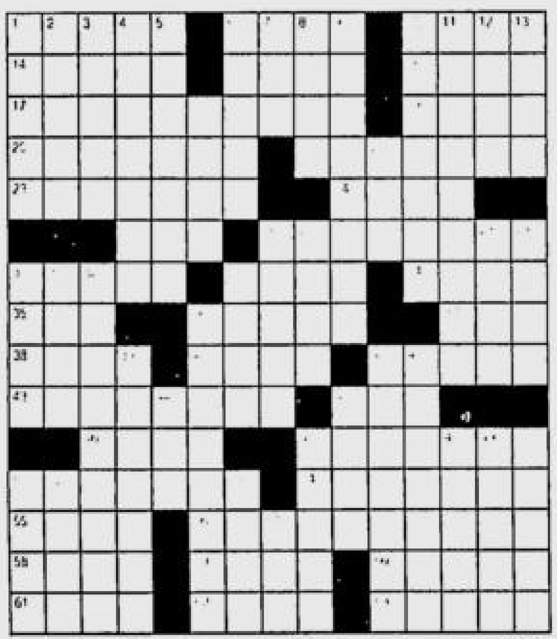
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Be patient with partners and close friends now. Perhaps they think you're working too hard? (All work and no play makes Jack dull.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Go forward with your plans to make repairs at home now. You might want to buy something new for where you live so that you can entertain others.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Silly delays with telephones, the mail and your means of transportation are now behind you. Go forward with plans, especially those connected with retail ideas, teaching and writing.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your search for a new job might have been fruitless recently. Your chances for employment are much better now! Think positive. Your luck has turned.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Donald L. Blocher
Arlington, TX
5/3/04

ACROSS
1 Leopard feature
6 __ pump
10 Blue-green color
14 Actor Sebastian
15 Exploitive one
16 Ballet wear
17 Elasticized binding
19 Young adult
20 Used transactions
21 Superlatively sore
23 Like many redheads
24 Delineate
25 Disney frame
26 Disgust
30 "My Fair Lady" director
33 Embrace
34 Winter white
35 Cycle or sex lead-in
36 Brownish gray
37 Wind dir.
38 Sicilian rumbler
40 Samovars
41 Milk by-products
43 Vehicles drawn by canines
45 Turndown vote
46 Restrain
47 Ships' loads
51 Strong feeling
54 News story
55 Ruth of baseball
56 Dairy product
58 Folksinger Ives
59 Dueling sword
60 During a broadcast
61 Dispatch a dragon
62 Set up for a drive
63 Tierney and Tunney

DOWN
1 Neck wrap
2 Worried walker
3 Way overweight
4 Smoking mixture
5 Cat on the prowl
6 Spumous
7 Cold War letters
8 Byte or buck starter
9 Make impossible
10 Now and then
11 Last Stuart monarch
12 Shoshones
13 Mother of one's cousin
18 Jodie Foster film
22 Word on a towel
26 People, places and things
27 Yodelers' peaks
28 Curtis or Danza
29 Female sheep
30 Signaled
31 John Ruskin's This Last
32 Hamadryad
33 Male red deer
36 Airplane type
39 Keenly
41 Wild swine
42 Cleanliness
44 Jackie's number two
45 DEA officer
47 Encrusted
48 Cousteau's milieu
49 Beast of Borden
50 Oracles
51 Declines
52 Heavy hammer
53 Scruff
57 Average grade

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

E	N	L	A	R	G	E	■	H	E	A	D	M	A	N
T	O	A	T	U	R	N	■	A	P	R	I	O	R	I
C	R	Y	O	N	I	C	■	T	E	A	C	H	I	N
■	■	■	N	E	L	L	■	R	E	L	E	A	S	E
W	A	G	E	S	L	A	V	E	■	■	■	I	E	R
E	R	A	■	■	■	S	I	D	E	B	U	R	N	S
S	C	R	E	E	N	P	A	S	S	E	S	■	■	■
T	H	R	A	C	E	■	■	■	P	R	E	S	E	T
■	■	■	S	H	O	O	T	I	N	G	S	T	A	R
P	I	S	T	O	N	R	O	D	■	■	■	A	R	E
A	M	A	■	■	■	I	N	C	A	P	A	B	L	E
U	P	T	E	M	P	O	■	A	L	A	S	■	■	■
S	U	R	R	E	A	L	■	R	E	V	I	S	A	L
E	T	A	M	I	N	E	■	D	U	E	D	A	T	E
D	E	P	A	R	T	S	■	S	T	R	E	W	E	D

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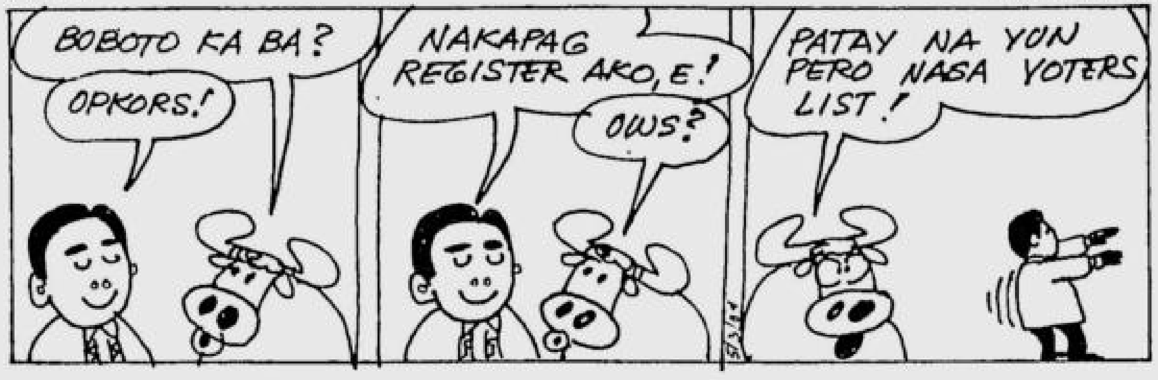
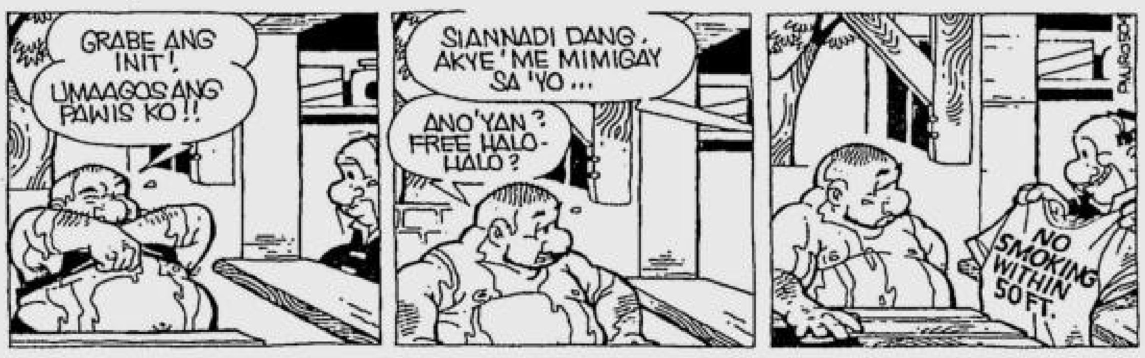
5/3/04

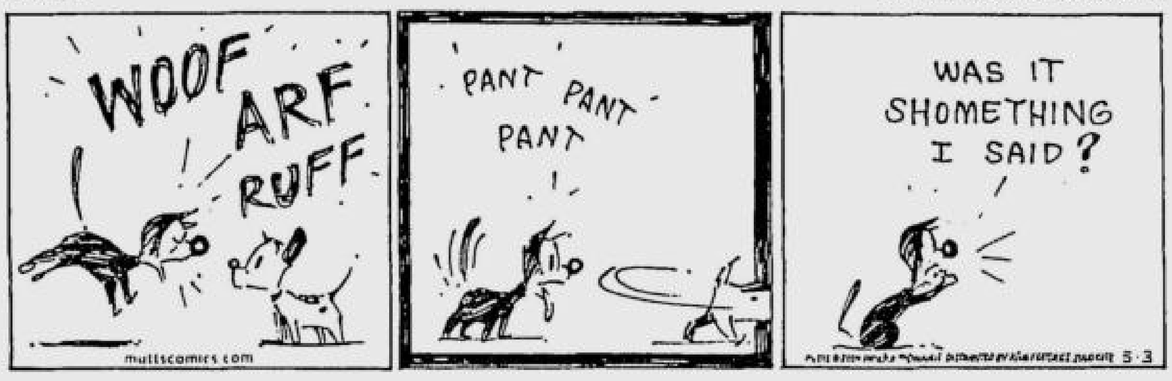
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


BOBOTO KA BA?
OPKORS!
NAKAPAG REGISTER AKO, E!
OWS?
PATAY NA YON PERO NASA VOTERS LIST!

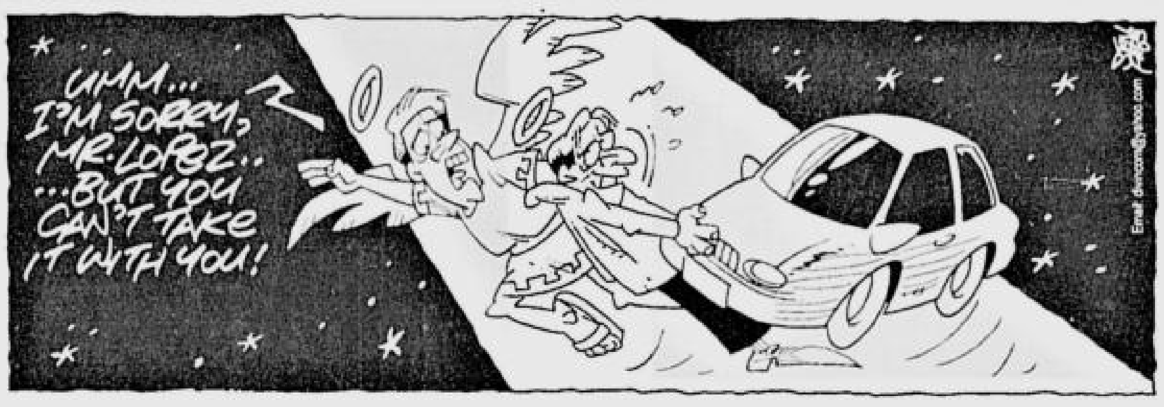
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


GRABE ANG INIT!
UMAAGOS ANG PAWIS KO!!
SIANNADI DANG, AKYE' ME MIMIGAY SA 'YO...
ANO'YAN? FREE HALO-HALO?
NO SMOKING WITHIN 50 FT.

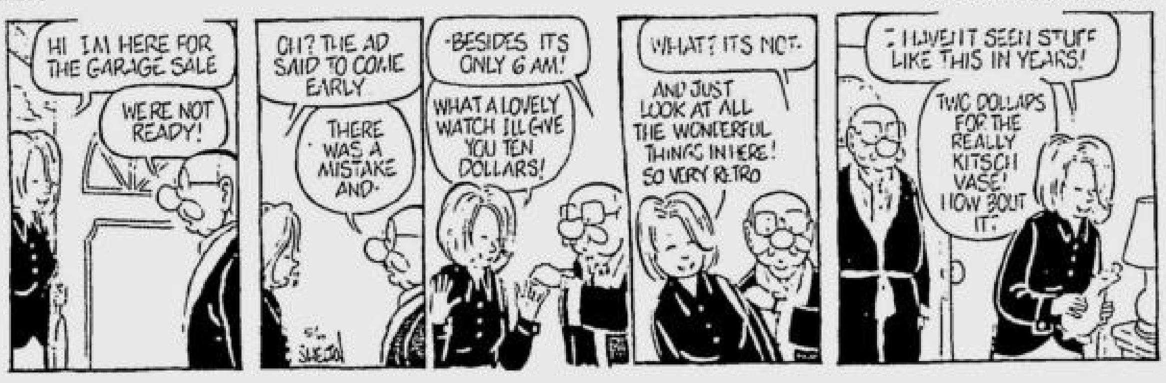
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WOOF
ARF
RUFF
PANT PANT PANT
WAS IT SHOMETHING I SAID?
muttscomics.com
5-3

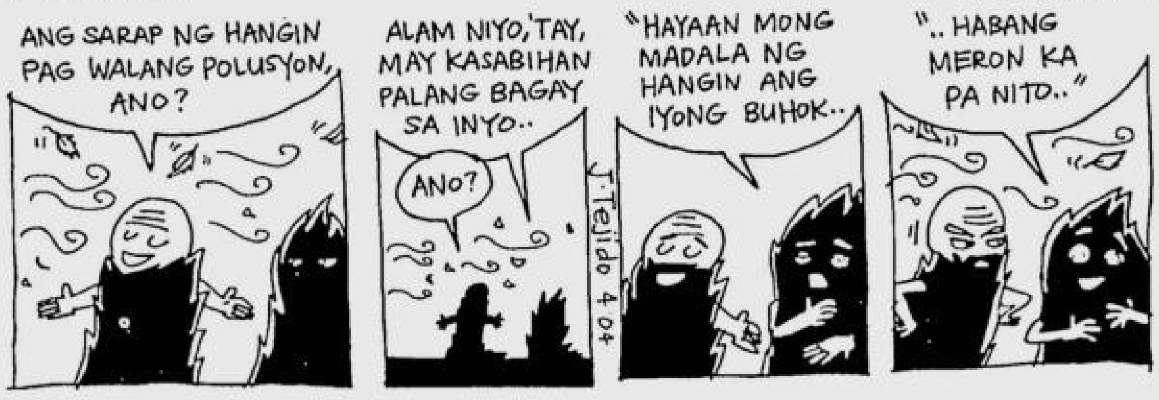
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


UMM... I'M SORRY, MR. LOPEZ.. ...BUT YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU!

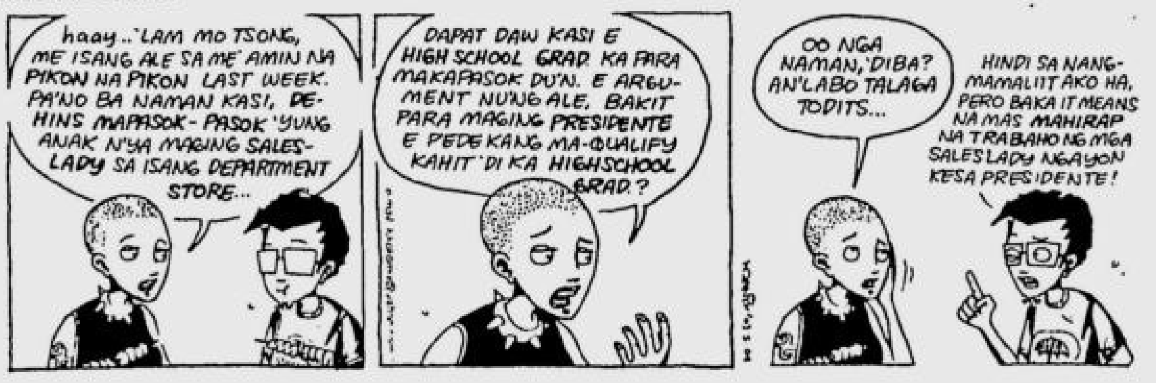
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


HI, I'M HERE FOR THE GARAGE SALE
WE'RE NOT READY!
OH? THE AD SAID TO COME EARLY
THERE WAS A MISTAKE AND-
-BESIDES ITS ONLY 6 AM!
WHAT A LOVELY WATCH I'LL GIVE YOU TEN DOLLARS!
WHAT? IT'S NOT-
AND JUST LOOK AT ALL THE WONDERFUL THINGS IN HERE! SO VERY RETRO
I HAVEN'T SEEN STUFF LIKE THIS IN YEARS!
TWO DOLLARS FOR THE REALLY KITSCH VASE! HOW 'BOUT IT.

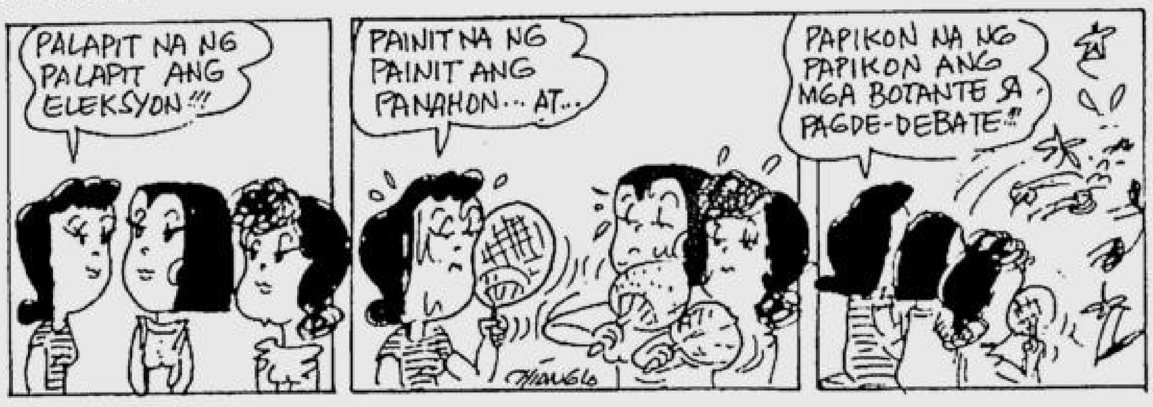
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG SARAP NG HANGIN PAG WALANG POLUSYON, ANO?
ALAM NIYO, 'TAY, MAY KASABIHAN PALANG BAGAY SA INYO..
ANO?
"HAYAAN MONG MADALA NG HANGIN ANG IYONG BUHOK..
".. HABANG MERON KA PA NITO.."
J. Tejido 4 04

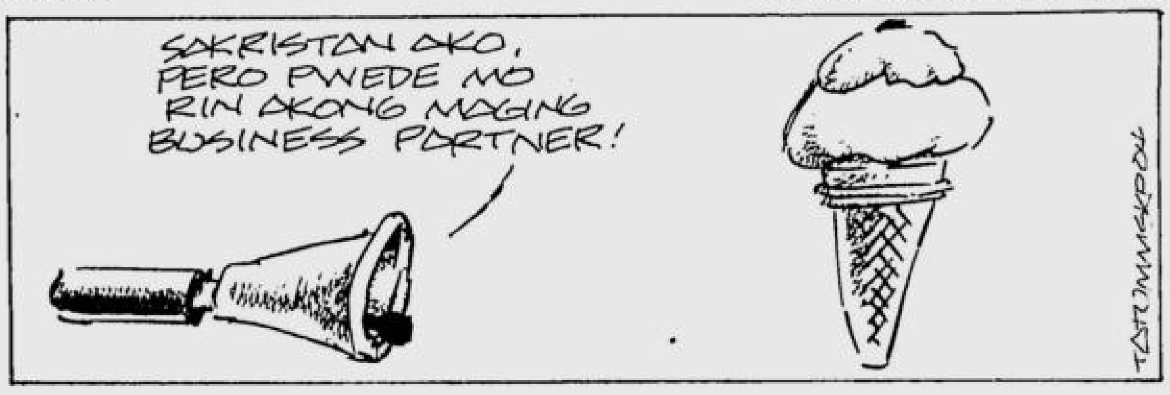
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

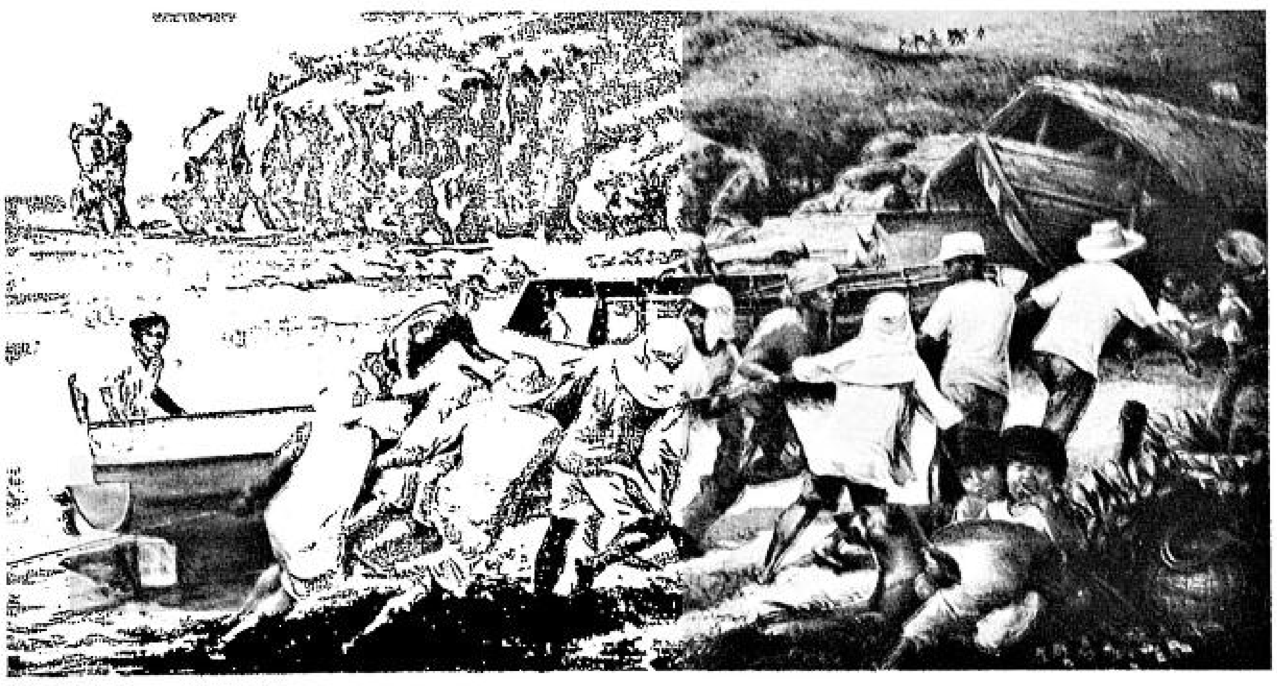

haay.. 'LAM MO TSONG, ME ISANG ALE SA ME' AMIN NA PIKON NA PIKON LAST WEEK. PA'NO BA NAMAN KASI, DEHINS MAPASOK-PASOK 'YUNG ANAK N'YA MAGING SALESLADY SA ISANG DEPARTMENT STORE...
DAPAT DAW KASI E HIGH SCHOOL GRAD KA PARA MAKAPASOK DU'N. E ARGUMENT NUNG ALE, BAKIT PARA MAGING PRESIDENTE E PEDE KANG MA-QUALIFY KAHIT 'DI KA HIGHSCHOOL GRAD?
OO NGA NAMAN, 'DIBA? AN'LABO TALAGA TODITS...
HINDI SA NANGMAMALIIT AKO HA, PERO BAKA IT MEANS NA MAS MAHIRAP NA TRABAHO NG MGA SALESLADY NGAYON KESA PRESIDENTE!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

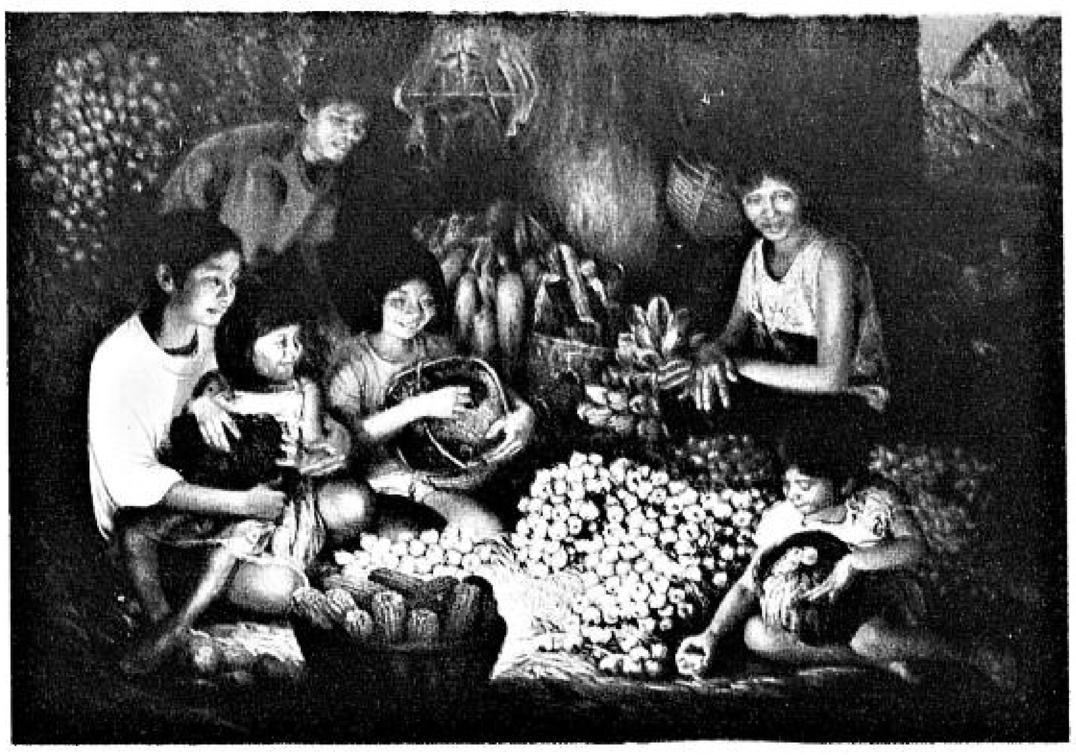

PALAPIT NA NG PALAPIT ANG ELEKSYON!!!
PAINIT NA NG PAINIT ANG PANAHON... AT...
PAPIKON NA NG PAPIKON ANG MGA BOTANTE SA PAGDE-DEBATE!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SAKRISTAN AKO, PERO PWEDE MO RIN AKONG MAGING BUSINESS PARTNER!
TATUMMIKPOL



"PORT of Basco"



"BOUNTIFUL Harvest in Sabtang"

The (Blanco) son also rises

From page H1

the Blancos paint, even Pitok's wife, Luring.

It can be argued that all of them paint in the same derivative style, but that should not stop the viewer from enjoying and appreciating the many fine qualities of the works: skilled draftsmanship, use of color, a humanist sensibility, and a feel for people and places.

The figurative and representational art of the Blancos has an appeal which immediately communicates itself to the viewer, whether art buff or "man in the street."

A case in point is Michael Blanco, whose solo show (at the Cultural Center's Pasilyo Vicente Manansala or 2/F Hallway, April 22-May 30) marks the first one-man exhibit by a second-generation Blanco (previous shows were family affairs).

Michael, a youthful-looking 37, is the third son of Pitok and Luring. Like his father, he is a product of University of Santo Tomas where he majored not in Fine Arts, but literature.

"Si Michael *magaling sa mukha* [good at rendering the human face]," remarks doting mother Luring as she evaluates the works of her children.

This skill is evident in the show, which focuses on the people and landscape-seascape of Batanes, and is titled "Ivatans: People of the North."

The younger Blanco's canvases have become more crowded and richer, the dark tones mingling with the cool colors, the blue of the sea and the earth-brown and yellow of the rock formations and the sturdy houses of the Ivatans.

We see the Ivatans at work and at play, eking out a living in their formidable environment.

In 1998, Blanco undertook a trip to Batanes with his family. He came back with vivid images of our northernmost province; and the results are 14 large oils on canvas, one watercolor-pencil and two sculptures.

While walking along Basco, the main island of Batanes, Blanco the literature major had a Joycean epiphany: "Why not paint one region at a time, presenting the people, their way of life, and their traditions? I would start with Batanes first, and then Ilocos or Cagayan, and so on."

Apart from the painterly values, what Michael Blanco is doing is important. He is, in effect, documenting the lifestyle of our people in their—shall we say?—natural habitat.

Learn art from renowned artists

THIS summer, Galerie Joaquin offers special instructional courses for interested students. Ten-session art courses for either Basic or Advanced Art Lessons are available.

Leading the team of instructors are noted artists Andi Cubi and Gig de Pio.

Cubi is one of the foremost masters of a style called romantic realism, while De Pio, a former associate professor of Fine Arts at the University of the Philippines, is now one of the country's foremost portraitists. Both were leading members of the Saturday Group of Artists led by the late National Artist Cesar Legaspi.

The special program includes Basic Drawing, Tonal Values, Landscape Painting, Painting with various media such as charcoal, oil pastel, soft pastel and watercolor.

For advanced students, lessons in oil painting as well as figurative and portrait painting will be included.

Programs can be adjusted to the specific interests and concerns of the students.

A unique portion of the course is that the final classes of the course will give students the chance to join actual on-the-spot sessions of the Guevarra Group of Artists.

Call 7239253 or 7239418 or visit Galerie Joaquin at 371 P. Guevarra St. corner Montessori Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan, Metro Manila.

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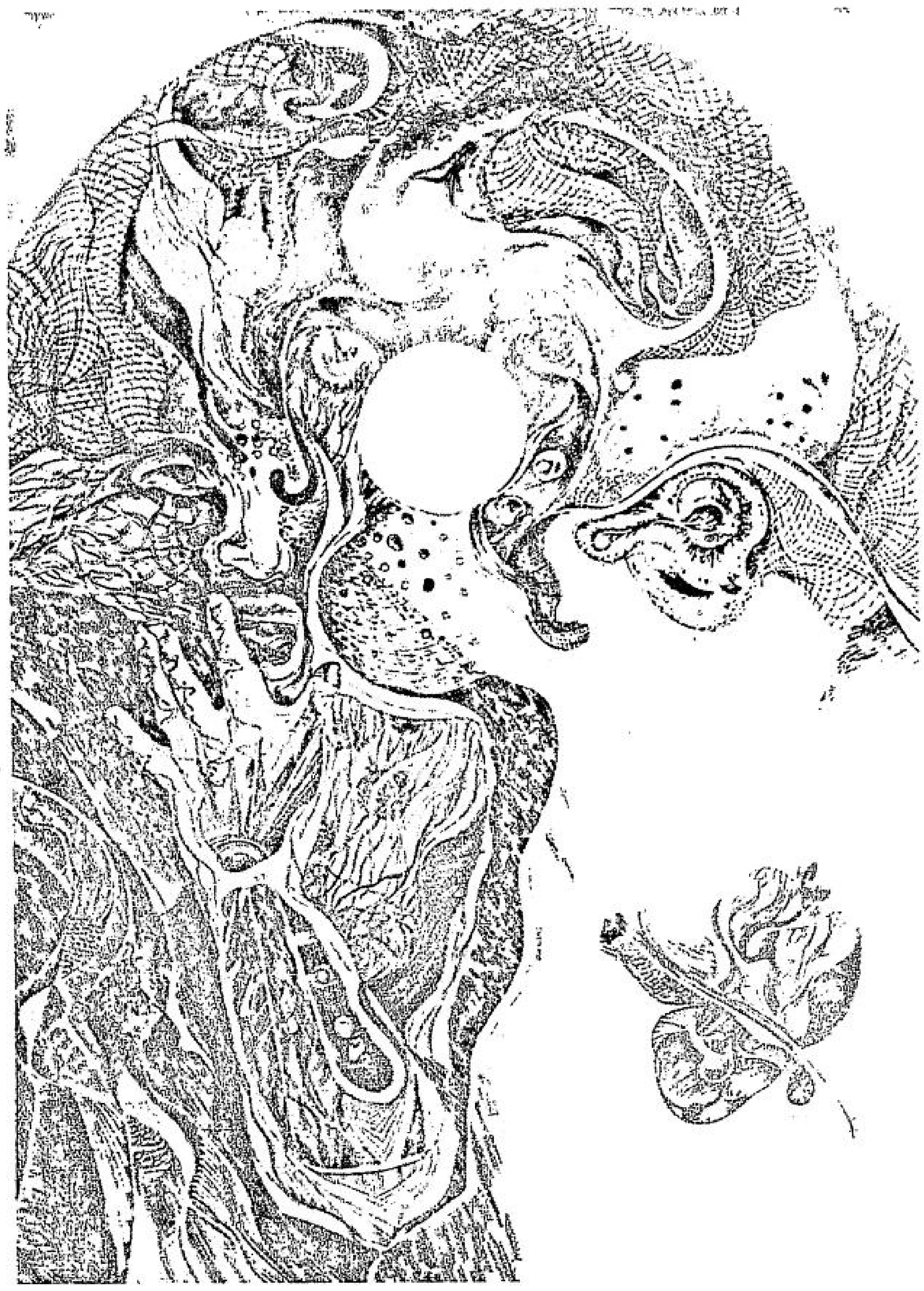
Decoration flirting with metaphysics



"HAND Warp"

By Constantino C. Tejero

> As his latest exhibit shows, Benjamin Torrado Cabrera produces art more from deep thinking than gut feeling

ART Nouveau suddenly reappeared with Benjamin Torrado Cabrera's "Images Recollected in Tranquility," his recent exhibit of 14 pieces of engraving in The Drawing Room, Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Ave., Makati City.

Here is an intermingling of lines and colors creating "circles, flowing curves, alternating rhythms, movements and diagonal compositions," as the artist says. This resulted from his exploration of the possibility of using burin engraving for printmaking.

Cabrera explains his process thus: "It is the use of burin engraving on acrylic plastic sheet printed on paper to create multiple monoprints. Manipulating the plates into serial planes, the printed images extend the picture plane."

Just as surprising, he has included in the exhibit a number of those plates as artworks by themselves, most of them serially arranged on racks. Lighted from below, they glow ethereally in the white room.

This, says the artist, pushes the acrylic plastic sheet into a three-dimensional format. "When the plates are arranged in regular intervals, they create volume, thus blurring the boundaries between fine prints, painting and sculpture."

To the artist, it has another function just as important. He is making use of the doublings and reversals that occur in transferring images from plates to paper "to articulate philosophical issues of similarity and dissimilarity, identity and nonidentity."

Far-out world

It is a far-out world Cabrera has created by blending earthly images with otherworldly forms: male and female nudes, seashells, foliage, corals, cobwebs, serpent's scales, outstretched arm, face, pair of legs, tongues, teeth, giant eyeball, stones, full moon, conch, water bubbles, koi, solar system.

Many of the titles point to this otherworldliness: "Space Oblivion," "Hand Warp," "Florigen," "Sound Waves," "Photosynthesis," "New Moon," "Portrait of Fire."

These are composed of black, maroon, red or khaki lines on washes of yellow, gray, gold, ochre, pink, violet, ultramarine, red, orange, brown, black, olive-green, aquamarine, with streaks of purple, turquoise, red, yellow, green, white, ochre, black.

A few of the pieces use mixed media, such as "New Moon," where a material of iridescent gold is collaged with the red paper.

In "Melting Point," a central circle on the white marmolized surface is spotted with yellow, white, pink, turquoise, then sprinkled with gold dust.

Predominantly using biomorphic forms, the artist says he intends the visual text to "transport the perceiver's consciousness into the realm of mysterious dimensions by means of personal and archetypal symbols."

Thinker's art

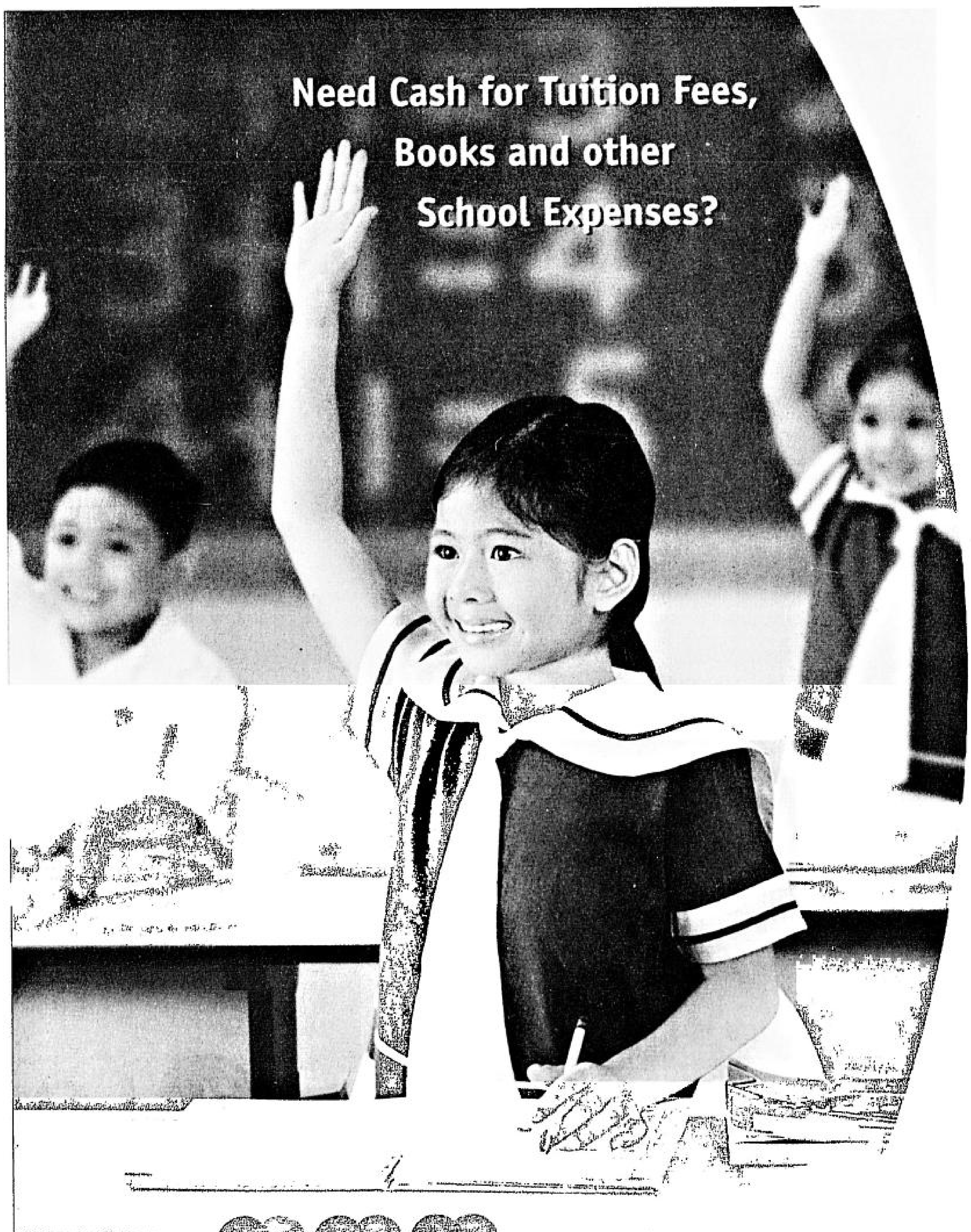
Pointing out the perfect circle, the triangle and organic forms as manifestations of duality and the interrelatedness of opposites, and citing Freud's hidden psyche and Jung's collective unconscious, the artist is not only interpreting his art but also explaining his creative process.

"The themes are the dual nature of things and the integration of some spontaneous acts of art production to express the subconscious directly onto the surface," he says. "If we were in touch with the unconscious, we would be in touch with our creative source. We would also be in contact with an even deeper level of the human psyche."

An art instructor in St. Scholastica's College, Cabrera majored in Painting in the University of Santo Tomas College of Fine Arts, attended an engraving workshop in Atelier Contre Point in Paris, and is taking his master's in the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts.

He has a fine sense of art-making. As his latest exhibit showed, aptly taking its title from Wordsworth, he produces art more from deep thinking than gut feeling.

Why, he has just put some sense of the metaphysical into the frivolities of Art Nouveau.



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